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"MARIE."

Page 181.

AYS OF

By JOHN

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WITH

STRAHAN

IN LUDGATE HILL

1872

1872

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WAYS OF GRACE.

By JOHN DE LILLE

CHURCH OF THE CHARGES OF TORONTO, &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

STRAHAN & CO.
29, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON.

1872

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DAYS OF GRACE

BY JOHN DE LIEFDE

AUTHOR OF "THE CHARITIES OF EUROPE," "THE POSTMAN'S BAG," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

STRAHAN & CO.

56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

1872

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DAYS OF

BY

W. H. C.

was just room for a person to stand. Between the foot of his bed and the small window opposite was a little wooden bench, upon which his wife was sitting; while two little children, covered with rags, were playing merrily at her feet. A shelf, nailed to the wall, and holding a cup and a pot, was the only piece of furniture in the room, besides the bed and the bench, and a piece of candle stuck in the mouth of a bottle standing in the window.

“And where do your children sleep?” I asked the woman.

“Under this bench, on the floor, sir.”

“Yes, on the bare floor, without bed, blanket, or pillow,” quoth the missionary; “and yet they look healthier and stronger than the children of many a rich man.”

“And where do you cook and eat?” I asked.

“In the kitchen below, sir, with the other tenants.”

The missionary here informed me that this room, with seventeen similar little dens, belonged to a landlady who lived in the kitchen on the ground floor, which at the same time was the dining and sitting-room for all her tenants. The rent of this miserable cell was three-and-sixpence a-week. The missionary read the story of blind Bartimeus to the sick man, and explained it to him. We then went down to the kitchen.

The inside of the shutter bore the inscription—

“Lodgings for single men travellers, 3d. per night.” Three or four boys from ten to fifteen were sitting astride the frame of the open window. Shoes and stockings they had not, and their trousers were sufficiently worn away to show their naked legs up to their knees. The kitchen was a tolerably large low-ceiled apartment. A long wooden table, capable of giving accommodation to about twenty individuals, ran across the place from the front to the back wall. A few dirty, wretched-looking women were sitting at it, some sleeping, others talking. The landlady, a tall, stout woman, with a gay, jovial-looking countenance, received us with evident signs of complacency.

“So this is the common kitchen for the tenants,” I said, looking round.

“Yes, sir,” she said; “and *isn't* it a good place? Look at that fire. It burns all the day, and plenty of water, sir.”

She went to the boiler, and turning the tap, showed that there was really water in it. Meanwhile the boys jumped from the window, and grouped round us, staring with curious looks. Their naked breasts showed they were not encumbered with under-clothing. A pair of torn trousers, and the remainder of an old coat, constituted the whole of their *garde-robe*.

“Do these boys also live here?” I asked.

“Live!” the landlady repeated, with a laugh. “Yes,

they live here and everywhere else. They are often here during the day."

"And where do they sleep?"

"Why, wherever they can make themselves a bed: on the steps, or in a passage."

"So they have no parents?"

"They probably never knew them," the missionary said. "These are our little vagabonds, who knock about the streets and do all sorts of mischief. I have often urged them to go to the reformatory, where they will be fed and dressed and taught, but they won't go. They prefer this life."

The boys heard this conversation with perfect composure, and looked us in the face with as little concern as if we were talking about the steeple of St. Giles's church. Still they were fine boys; two of them especially bore really aristocratic-looking countenances. Alas! their fathers were perhaps this very moment enjoying the pleasures of a continental tour, or tally-ho-ing across the turf. Ah, when on that great day of the revelation of all the secret things of man, the sinner shall learn the subsequent history of his crime in all its ramifications, what a bitter drop that knowledge will be in the wormwood-cup of his everlasting remorse!

I visited five or six other families with my friend the missionary that day. He faithfully and earnestly proclaimed to them both life and death, the blessing

and the curse. He was kindly received by all, and not the slightest obstacle was thrown in his way to prevent him from delivering his message. In two families, however, I observed that his words were replied to with something more than a dead silence. These people evidently looked for something better than merely temporal support. The words of the missionary appeared to go home to their hearts, as the only true consolation in their poverty and affliction. It was touching, also, to see what a warm interest they took in his person, and how glad they were to learn that he had met with no insult that day.

As we were walking out of the district we passed two policemen, who were walking in.

"You see, they always go two together here," the missionary said; "and at some seasons they do not visit this quarter except in bands of twelve."

"And *you* go always alone?" I observed.

"You know," he answered with a smile, "*we* are never alone, wherever we go; for it is written, 'The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him.'"

The kindness of the secretaries of the Society enabled me to accompany another missionary on his visits in the district of Westminster. As far as I could judge from one day's visiting, it appears to me that this quarter, though exhibiting fewer instances

of wretched pauperism than that of St. Giles, surpasses it in villany, profligacy, and immorality. And yet the missionary here is looked upon as if he were a being of a higher order. He is treated with the greatest respect, and even with signs of grateful affection. By far the greater portion of the rooms we visited were inhabited by prostitutes and families of a doubtful character: still, no sooner did he make his appearance than their faces lit up, and all were ready to listen to his serious and often deeply affecting words. I did not observe the slightest effort to thwart or insult him. All agreed that he was perfectly right, and some proved the influence of his words by the tears that glistened in their eyes. And if any one should try to molest him, he was sure that the whole quarter would rise in his defence.

I only witnessed one instance of his being treated unkindly, and this came from an Irish Roman Catholic. It was at a common kitchen. The missionary entered with a bundle of tracts in his hand. There were about eight women and half-a-dozen of men. Some were sitting by the fire, others on the bench that ran alongside the long wooden table. One was busily engaged in picking at a fish-bone; another was nibbling at a hot potato stuck on the point of a knife; a third was cutting the nails of his toes. The loud hubbub that preceded our entrance was at once turned into a respectful silence when we made our

appearance. Some of the women even rose and dropped a curtsey. I saw that an old acquaintance had entered. They all accepted a tract with thanks, till the missionary offered one to a ruffianly-looking man, who refused it with a curse.

“Oh, for shame!” cried the women with one voice; and in a trice three or four men jumped up, and in a threatening attitude flung half-a-dozen of not very select epithets at the man’s head. Now the whole kitchen was turned into a Babel of confusion. “Mind your own business!” the Irishman cried. “Hold your blasphemous tongue, you ——!” cried the men, “or else we’ll knock out your brains,” etc. It was some time before the missionary could silence them, so as to be able to speak to the offender.

“Only keep quiet, my friend, and tell me what the reason——”

“All I want to know is about the origin, sir, the origin. You understand?” cried Paddy, vehemently gesticulating with his fists.

“But only tell me why you——”

“I say, sir, I know all about it,” screamed the Irishman.

“But you don’t let me speak out. I only want——”

“I only want to put one question to you,” Paddy continued, raising his voice still higher.

“If you don’t hold your tongue,” a man cried, “I’ll cut strabs off your ugly face.”

“Only one question ! one question !” the Irishman shouted.

A stout, giant-like woman now stepped forward, and placing herself right before Paddy, put her hands to her sides, and drawing a deep breath, she screamed with all the power of vociferation her lungs were capable of—“Silence !” I thought an engine was sounding its whistle.

This remedy took effect. The whole kitchen was for a moment silent as the grave.

“Well, let us hear what that question of yours is,” quoth the missionary, in a kind, gentle tone.

“I want you to tell me who first brought Christianity into this country,” the Irishman answered, still in a screaming voice.

“Why, the Lord did it,” the missionary replied.

“The Lord ! Was the Lord ever in England ?” the Irishman asked in a tone of contempt.

“No, but He sent His servants.”

“And *who* was that servant, sir ?” Paddy cried triumphantly. “*Who* was it ? Wasn’t it Saint Gustin, sir ? Saint Gustin !”

“Yes, it was Saint Augustine ; but what has that to do with —”

“Very well, sir, very well,” Paddy cried, and taking his stand face to face with the missionary, he said, “And now, can you tell me to what Church Saint Gustin belonged ?”

“Yes; to the Church of Christ.”

This answer seemed to put him out a little. He evidently had not expected it, and taking his seat on the bench again, he said—

“What? No, sir. I say—”

“You don’t know it,” several voices cried. A little man stepped forward, whose face was perfectly hideous. When his lips were closed, two teeth in the left corner of his mouth stuck out like tusks. And as if to preserve the symmetry he held a pipe in the right corner.

“Arn’t you ashamed of kicking up such a row about Gustin?” he cried. “My brother was a sailor—”

“Hang your brother!” the Irishman cried. “I say Saint Gustin—”

A general uproar took place, and the company again fell into great confusion, sufficient to split one’s head, while the Irishman tried to outcry the assembly by roaring, “Gustin! Gustin!”

The missionary succeeded in silencing the tempest.

“Now let us hear who Gustin was,” he said. “I am sure you don’t know.”

“Who, then, was he?” asked Paddy.

“Why, it is *you* who were to tell it us.”

“Wasn’t he—wasn’t he—Ay, sir?” he continued, rising again and knocking his right fist into the palm of his left hand. “Ay, sir, what did the Lord say to

Peter? What did he say? He said—he said—upon this rock I will build my Church. Yes, so he said.”

“I agree,” the missionary answered; “but what did our blessed Lord mean by that rock?”

But every effort to continue the conversation failed. The other men pounced upon their obstinate companion, and it became rather dangerous to stay longer at this place.

“Here you have had a specimen of what I have often to go through,” the missionary said to me when we again breathed the fresh air. “But for those Irishmen, I should have but quiet work here. I had rather deal with thieves and outcasts than with those intolerant fanatics.”

While walking on we met with a man tolerably well dressed. The missionary stopped him, and asked him about his present way of living. They had known one another for a long time. The man was nearly seventy, and cohabiting with a woman to whom he was not married. He had been a notorious drunkard, but seemed to have given up his intemperate habits of late,—at least so he said. The missionary now seriously spoke to him about his connection with the woman. In the course of the conversation it appeared that the man was very well acquainted with the Gospel, and when the missionary reminded him of what God’s Word said about the future state of the drunkard and adulterer, he showed

the pangs of his conscience by the emotion that was visible on his countenance.

"Poor man," the missionary said, when we walked on, "God has enabled me by continuous addresses to bring him so far that he sees the truth as clearly as you and I, but he never can resolve to take a decided step."

"Can you point to many instances of notorious sinners being truly converted to Christ?" I asked.

"Alas!" he answered, "not many. I believe that my work here is not in vain in the Lord, but it is mostly a matter of *belief*; it is not often I am permitted to *see* the fruits of what I have sown."

I thought it must be so. Gin here exercises such a power over the whole population, that the Word of God seems to die away like a sound in a bottomless pit. And yet, who can tell where the Spirit of God may not penetrate to unlock a door which is closed to the hand of man? The work of the London City Missionary Society is certainly a hard, and in many cases apparently a hopeless work. But if it ceased, I am afraid the whole of the metropolis would ere long break down under the pestiferous miasmi that would spread from those sinks of corruption and profligacy.

whole of the poor wretch's history stood at once before my recollection. A shudder thrilled through me at the thought of what the end must be of such a life; and that end now so near! He had been well educated; he had, in his youth, been a regular attendant at the house of God; he knew his Bible as well as I knew it. Admonitions, warnings, entreaties to keep himself aloof from the paths of evil had not been wanting. The Spirit of God had not ceased repeatedly to knock at the door of his heart, but he had stubbornly resisted. And now the measure was full, and he was summoned to appear before his Maker and Judge to give an account of his stewardship!

"Is he in a condition to be spoken to?" I asked the missionary.

"He is, and I believe he is now accessible to good words—at least, he asked me to lend him a Bible, and he thanked me in a voice of emotion for my short address and prayer."

"I will go with you and see him," I said.

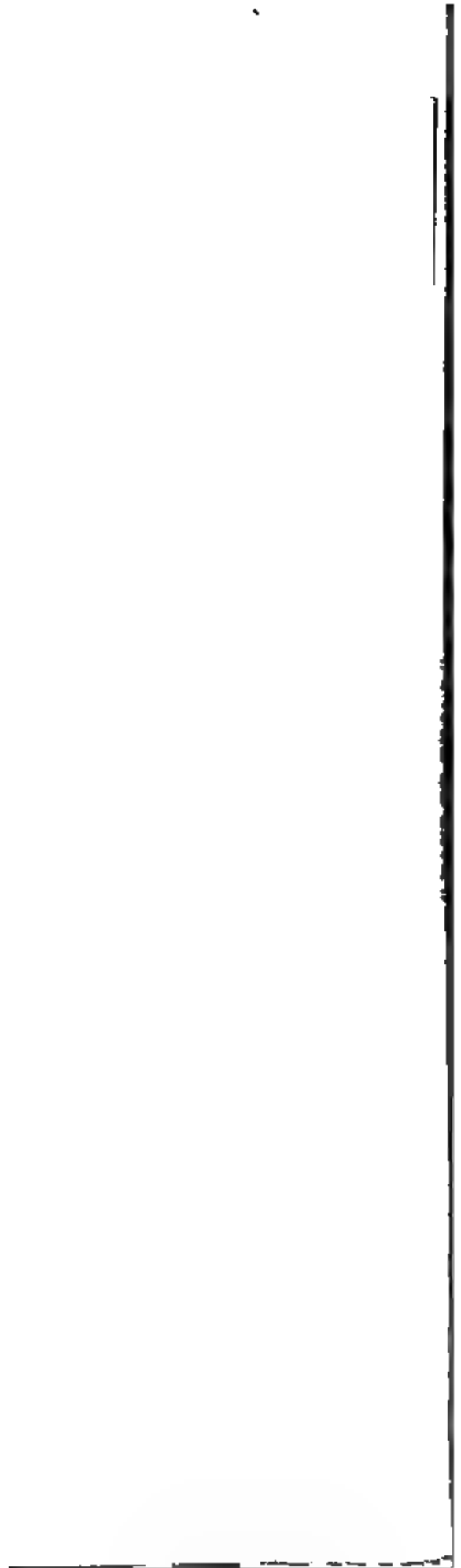
As we crossed Gresham Street, we were passed by a young lady who kindly nodded to Mr. Smith.

"Who is she?" I asked.

"She is one of my missionary agents," answered Mr. Smith, with a smile.

"Indeed!" said I, in a tone of surprise. "So you keep a staff of agents on your own account?"

"I do," was the answer; "they are of both sexes,



you know. You too are one of them, and I have you on duty just now, you observe."

"Oh, I see," replied I.

"Ah," he continued, "she is a real angel of consolation; she is gifted with a rare talent for finding out distress where it is screened behind a respectable appearance, and for filling an empty lamp with oil without soiling its glossy outside. I daresay you have heard of that carpenter who fell from the roof of a house in Basinghall Street, and died instantaneously, a few months since; well, many heard of it, but it was soon forgotten, and we least of all thought of the wife and three children whom the man left behind. But Miss Rogers betook herself the next morning to the poor widow's house, to remind her that she had a Husband still of whom death could not bereave her. She soon found out all about the woman's circumstances, and that all her sources of subsistence were on a sudden stopped; and seeing that she was an honest, respectable person, who kept her household in good order, Miss Rogers secretly collected subscriptions till she was able to put her in a little shop, where she now earns a livelihood for herself and her little ones; and nobody knows anything about it,—nor should I, had not the good woman herself made me her confidant."

While thus talking, we reached the quarter in which Hurt lived. A dark wooden staircase in a

dirty court led us to a back room on the second floor. If misery and destitution had taken up their abode anywhere it was here. Shabby remains of former affluence strangely contrasted with the most loathsome effects of poverty, neglect, and filth. A walnut bookcase, which must have once been an elegant piece of furniture, was placed against the dirty white-washed wall; two of its four nicely-carved pillars were broken, and its much-damaged shelves bore a broken soap-box, a bundle of false hair, a piece of a comb, a wine-bottle with a bit of candle stuck in it, a cracked wine-glass, a stuffed bird, a broken flute, etc. Chairs there were not, but I saw two wooden forms, one of which was occupied by two half-naked little children, who were playing with a dead fish and a pitcher of water. Four other children were at the Ragged School, which Mr. Smith had succeeded in getting them to attend regularly. A frame of a bedstead, covered with straw and rags, stood in a corner opposite the fire-place. I could scarcely recognise the pale, emaciated, unshaven face, or realise that it was that of a man who was once one of the handsomest persons I ever knew. Reclining on the edge of his bed was a tall slender woman, whose regular features betokened past beauty. Her dress was a perfect illustration of the parable of the old garment patched up with pieces of new cloth. Still there was something in her attitude and movements

which betrayed the former actress. She was the image of suffering and destitution. It was evident that it was from weakness that she had taken her place on the bed, as she was scarcely able to keep herself standing. After having risen when we entered, she again dropped down, almost fainting from the exertion.

Hurt covered his face with his hands when he saw me, and burst into tears.

"I will just leave you alone for a minute," whispered Mr. Smith into my ear, "as I am going to buy some refreshment for the woman and the children."

I took the wooden form which was unoccupied, and seated myself by the bedside.

"Don't be afraid of me," I said to the invalid; "I am not come to upbraid, but to comfort you."

"Oh, Mr. ——," he answered, casting a look upon me which I shall never forget—I cannot tell whether it was more indicative of remorse or of surprise,—“I am unworthy of so much kindness. Can you forgive me all the evil I have done to you?”

I tendered him my hand, which he pressed spasmodically.

"With all my heart," said I. "But my forgiveness is a small matter, my friend. I am myself a sinner, and what is all the evil you have done to me in comparison with what God in His mercy has forgiven me? The person to whom you have done the

greatest evil is yourself. Are you aware of the condition you are in at present?"

"I am," was the answer. "I am a dying man. There is no hope for me, neither for my body, nor—nor—for my soul!" he added, in a voice choking with tears.

"There is for your soul!" said I, in a decisive tone. "As long as it is the day of grace, there is in Jesus an open door to escape, even for the chief of sinners."

"Day of grace," he repeated mournfully. "You don't know, sir, how recklessly during my life I have played with that word. Do you remember how, when I was a lad, you one day ordered me to cash a three months' bill at the bank of Messrs. —— and Co.? I made the remark that it was three days over the date on which the bill was due, and you seemed pleased with that observation. You then explained to me what days of grace are, and that, after the expiration of them, there is no possibility of further delaying in payment. 'Now, Willie,' you then said to me, 'mind the days of grace which God has allowed you, and be sure to have the money when your life's bill is due.' This saying of yours made a deep impression upon me at the time, and I began to be thoughtful about the concerns of my soul. But pride and self-complacency took possession of my heart, and brought me into bad company; and after that, when my conscience rebuked me, and you re-

monstrated with me, I would often in a jesting mood say to myself, ' Ah, well, the days of grace which the Lord allows are more than three; plenty of time before my bill becomes due !' But oh, it is due now, and the days of grace are at an end, and what have I to pay with ?"

At this moment Mr. Smith re-entered, and placed the contents of a basket, which a boy brought in, upon the table. There was everything a hungry stomach could crave,—a jug with steaming soup, and a loaf, and half a pound of butter, and a plate of cold meat, and half a pint of port for the sick man, and oranges, and some sugar, and two woollen jackets for the naked children, and a box with soap, and a towel. I wondered how he could have got it all for ten shillings, and thought such a lucrative business was worth speculating in; so I again dropped something into his hand and whispered a few words about coal and a bed and a blanket. While he was away on this errand it was a luxury to see how the soup and a considerable portion of the other eatables disappeared under the hands of the woman and her two little children. Meanwhile, I took the cracked wine-glass from the shelf of the book-case and pressed an orange into it, and having mixed a little sugar with it, I gave it to the sick man. The whole scene was like a showery day after a long summer drought.

" William," I said, " the days of grace are not yet

at an end. Suppose there is only one day to run, there is yet time to get the amount of your bill."

"Oh, it is too late now," he sighed; "I have wasted my time."

"No, it is not," I answered. "Still it is the day of grace."

"My debt is so great! my sins are so great!" groaned he, covering his face with his hands.

"Not too great to be paid even this moment," I replied. "If you had to pay your debt in silver and gold, I should, with you, despair to collect such an enormous amount in one day. But you know the apostle says, 'We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.' That fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness is inexhaustible, dear friend, and accessible at every moment. As long as it is the day of grace, that fountain stands in the midst of the world's market-place, flowing on and on without stopping, and whosoever is athirst, let him take the water of life freely."

These words seemed to have a calming influence upon his mind. At least his nervous emotion abated, and he appeared more accessible to quiet reasoning.

"You do not know, sir," he said to me in a calm voice, "how impossible it is, at the end of a life such as I have led, to believe that there is still a way to escape its due reward."

“Impossible!” I exclaimed. “Is there anything impossible with God? Look at the thief on the cross. I know your life has not been what it ought, but his was not better at any rate. Yet at the very last moment he was saved. Only one minute remained for him before he died to turn his face prayerfully to Jesus, and the whole list of his sins, long and black as it was, was swept away by one word of the all-merciful Saviour.”

“True,” answered he, “and I have often thought in these days of agony and despair of that wonderful story, trying to draw a ray of light from it, to comfort my soul in its utter darkness; but every effort has been paralysed by the thought that, great sinner as that thief was, yet he was but a child in wickedness compared with me, for he never knew the Gospel and the power of grace until he beheld the Saviour on the cross. But I have from my youth been trained in the knowledge of Christ; I even at one time pledged myself to His service, but I fell away and delivered myself up unto the service of the devil, rejecting so great a salvation, crucifying Christ again, and counting His blood an unholy thing. And now that the evil master whom I served as long as I had the power abandons me, and leaves me in the hands of the tormentors, I wish to escape and avail myself of that grace which I once so recklessly insulted and rejected; but I feel that it would be a fresh insult to

be impudent enough to apply under such circumstances and after such antecedents. No, sir, there is no hope for me. My days of grace have expired for ever !”

He buried his face in the rags that constituted his pillow, and for a while continued to weep like a child. Alas ! I could not help feeling that there was too much truth in what he had been saying. Looking at him only in the light of justice, what could be more righteous than his condemnation ! He was like a tree which had wasted all its sap and strength in producing only leaves to please itself with, and poisonous fruits which had been obnoxious to everybody ; and now, after having spoiled its strength, when it is about to wither away in the best of its days—what garden can it be transplanted to ? But I could not allow justice alone to speak here. I could have allowed it had I found him a hardened sinner, trying to establish his own righteousness. But I found him bathed in tears, accusing himself, broken-hearted and at the brink of despair under the remorse of his conscience. This, at any rate, is not a work of his late master, I thought. This is a work of grace in his heart. The day has not yet drawn to its close. No, no, Jesus will not allow it to close before His Spirit accomplish the work He has commenced !

“ William,” I said, when he had resumed his former

calmness, "I wish I could say that you are over-colouring your sad condition; but, alas! I must remind you that what you have been saying just now was said by me years ago when I spoke to you of the fearful consequences which your irregular life would necessarily lead to."

"Oh! I know, I know," said he. "You foretold me all I am experiencing now. You pointed to my deathbed, and you asked me what would be left to console me with if I continued in that way? But I thought, the day of grace is long, and I shall manage to be in good time yet."

"Do you remember," I asked, "how I once said to you, 'William, do not play with truth. It is like a steel spring: if once bent beyond its power it never acts again as it did before; it becomes lame and powerless to your mind, and even the most striking and consoling text of Scripture will lose its taste and flavour?'"

"Oh! I do remember it," replied he, "and it *was* so true. I know all the texts of the Gospel which speak of Christ's love towards sinners; but they are nothing to me, they have lost their meaning, they leave me comfortless. I knew them all by heart from my childhood, and during my wicked life they would rise thousands of times to my memory, even in the very moments when I was indulging my sinful passions; but I threw them away fretfully, laughed

them down, or drowned them in drink. But now they come again to revenge themselves upon me, marshalling themselves in a file before my wearied mind day and night, looking at me, as it were, with cold, stern faces, as if saying, 'God judge between thee and us!'"

A shudder passed through my frame at these words. I looked upward to God and sighed, "Thou canst make them smile upon him again."

At this moment Mr. Smith re-entered, whispering into my ear that the articles he had bought were to be sent within an hour.

"Here lies a dying sinner without hope," I said to him. I then told him the topic of our conversation.

"Just so," he said, with a stern face; "these are the bitter fruits of sin. This man's sins are too great to be forgiven."

I started, and looked Mr. Smith in the face, to ascertain whether he was really in earnest. Even Hurt cast a look of surprise at him.

"Mr. Smith," said I, in a tone of deep disapproval, "do you know what you are saying?"

"I do," was the answer. "Scripture says, 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for his enemies.'"

"I know that text of Nahum," said I; "but in the next verse he says, 'The Lord is slow to anger.'"

"True," replied Mr. Smith, gravely; "but he adds, 'He will not at all acquit the wicked.' Here is a man who has spent all his life in wickedness. How then can he be acquitted? I have read nowhere in the Bible of such a great sinner being pardoned."

"Oh, misery!" said Hurt, burying his face in his rags.

I looked at Mr. Smith surprised and inquiringly.

"No, I don't recollect that I ever read of such a great sinner being pardoned," repeated Mr. Smith, taking no notice of my look.

"Take Peter, for instance, who denied the Lord three times with an oath," I said; sharply.

"Ah, that's quite a different case," replied Mr. Smith; "his was only a moment's weakness; here is a man who has denied the Lord all his life long. Of such sinners being pardoned there is no instance in the Bible, as far as I recollect."

"Well, then, *I* know one," cried Hurt in a triumphant tone. "Take Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who made his son pass through the fire and wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger, and shed much innocent blood till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other. Yet when he prayed to the Lord in his prison, he was pardoned, and restored to his throne in mercy. Now, I am a great sinner, I know, but I cannot see how I am a greater sinner than he."

“ Ah, but mind that was in the day of the law,” observed Mr. Smith, dogmatically; “ and that was a time of great mercy, as it seems.”

“ Well, in what day are we *now*?” asked Hurt, quickly.

“ Why, I don’t know,” replied Mr. Smith, drily. “ What day do *you* think we are in ?”

“ We are in the day of grace !—yes, in the day of grace !” cried Hurt, passionately.

While saying so, in the fervour of his agitation, he raised himself up in his bed, and looked Mr. Smith in the face with eyes glistening like live coals. Then, overpowered by his weakness, he fell back on his pillow quite exhausted.

There was a pause. I now understood Mr. Smith’s purpose.

“ Well, then,” said he, clasping the dying man’s hand in his, “ if God pardoned a Manasseh in the day of the law, what will he not do with you in the day of grace !”

“ONLY A LOST CHILD.”

“**I** HAVE just come to tell you that Jane Higgins is getting worse, and is very anxious to see you,” said my friend Mrs. Parkes to me.

“Do you think her end is near?” I asked, struck by the melancholy, though not quite unexpected, intelligence.

“I fear it is,” was the answer. “The doctor said she may live a couple of days still, but he would not be surprised to find her dead to-morrow. Poor thing! what a pity—such a good, lovely girl! But, the Lord be praised, she rejoices in her Saviour.”

I locked my desk, took my hat, and proceeded at once to the invalid's home. But, before entering her sick-room, I must tell you her story. Perhaps you will learn from it that every loss is not a calamity; nay, that even the loss of all may be but the beginning of a great gain.

There was a crowd in one of the main thorough-

fares of the West-End some twenty years ago. A little girl of four was standing crying on the pavement. Her face was rather soiled by her tears, which she tried to wipe away with her hands, yet she was a fine interesting-looking child. Her dress showed that she did not belong to the lowest class, for there was a neatness, and even a shade of elegance, noticeable in the cut of her frock. The expression of her countenance, too, seemed to show that her parents must be people of some education.

Of course there were women and children crowding round her, and ladies and gentlemen peeping over other people's shoulders for a minute or two, making room again for other ladies and gentlemen, who, upon finding that it was "only a lost child," and that a policeman was already looking after her, continued their walk under the impression, "that it was all right now." But one lady remained, and, pressing through the crowd, took a place near the policeman. It was my friend Mrs. Parkes.

"Where do you live?" the policeman asked, gently laying his hand upon the child's shoulder.

"Mother!" she answered, with a fresh burst of tears.

The policeman repeated the question, but obtained the same answer.

"You may continue at that till to-morrow morning," a gentleman observed in a humorous tone.

"Poor thing!" said a woman standing behind the

child, and looking down upon her with compassion, " how anxious her mother will be !"

" Let me speak to the child," Mrs. Parkes said, upon seeing that the policeman made no progress.

Mrs. Parkes' kind motherly voice had a wonderful effect upon the child. She gradually ceased crying, and gave answers to the questions which were put to her. All that could be got out of her, however, was that she had a father and a mother, and two brothers, that her name was Jane, and that she lived in King Street. But which of the thirty King Streets of London she could not tell.

" Well, she must go to the station then," the policeman said, taking her by the hand, and trying to walk off with her. But the child again began to cry so bitterly, and to struggle so much, that the policeman prepared to take her up in his arms and carry her away by force.

A general murmur of disapprobation rose from the bystanders. The policeman hesitated.

" What else can I do ?" he said, " I can't leave the child here."

" Suppose you don't find out her parents," Mrs. Parkes said, " what will you do with her?"

" Why, I don't know, ma'am. I think we must send her to the workhouse, if they will take her."

" Poor thing ! poor thing !" the mob cried.

" Do take her to our house, mamma," said Mary, Mrs. Parkes' little daughter.

"Yes, please, mamma, do take her," said her boy John.

The policeman had no objection to the child's going to the lady's house, which was close by. Mrs. Parkes gently took her by the hand, and she went without the least resistance.

The next day the policeman came back to say that the child's parents lived in a lane off King Street, Tower Hill. He had found her mother, who was a French woman, lying in bed in the last stage of consumption. The poor woman had not even missed her child; for during the last few days it had been staying with one of the neighbours. Her husband was a sailor, and so were her two sons, one fifteen years of age and the other seventeen. They were reported as a bad, drunken lot. The father was on a voyage to China. The child's youngest brother had taken her out for a walk; but had not made his appearance since. Some days later it turned out that he had been sent to prison on account of some disorderly conduct. The mother was said to be a good, respectable woman, who worked hard to support herself and her girl, as long as she was able; but of late she had been living upon the charity of her neighbours.

Mrs. Parkes requested me to accompany her to the poor woman's house. We took little Jane with us.

The scene which we there witnessed was heart-rending. The sick woman started up to embrace her "darling" once more.

" My own poor darling," she cried, " who will care for you when I am gone ?"

" My good woman," Mrs. Parkes said abruptly, " do you know Jesus ?"

" O yes," she answered, making the sign of the Cross.

" She is a Roman Catholic," a woman whispered, who had followed us into the house.

" It is Jesus who sent me in the way of your lost child," Mrs. Parkes continued. " Jesus is the Saviour of the lost. He will save you also, if you give yourself up into His merciful and almighty hands."

The woman cast a sad look of despair at the child.

" You have been very kind to my Jane," she said. " Will you care for her when I am dead ? I know you are a good lady. God will bless you for it. She is a good child, ma'am."

She uttered these words with great effort. Mrs. Parkes consented to take the child under her care, and it was affecting to witness the glow of joy which this promise spread over the pale emaciated face.

" Your child will be cared for," Mrs. Parkes said. " But let me ask after yourself. How is your soul, my good woman ? Is it lost or saved ? You are soon to appear before the eternal Judge. Can you die in peace ?"

The dying woman gave no answer. We then spoke a few words of admonition and consolation, and left

the house with the child. On calling the next day, I found her dead.

There lived a good, respectable widow, Mrs. Williams, in Mrs. Parkes' neighbourhood, and she kept a small shop. Mrs. Parkes boarded the child with her. Nearly a year elapsed when, one day, Jane's father came to see her. That he was fond of drink was evident from the first glance at his face. Still his fault seemed to arise from weakness of character rather than intentional wickedness. He was a merry care-for-nothing fellow. He came to say that he had married another wife, whose acquaintance he had made in a public-house, and that if we had no objection to keep his child he would be thankful to leave her, as his present wife had enough to do to keep his other two "rascals" right. Mrs. Parkes was but too glad to agree to this arrangement. "This is a merciful leading of God," she said. "To return the dear child to her father would be to send her back to the pit of perdition from which we have so providentially been led to rescue her. But I knew our Heavenly Father would arrange it in some such way as this."

Little Jane grew up a most excellent girl. She became the pet of the neighbourhood, and the pleasure of Mrs. Parkes and her family. It appeared that she was gifted with a clear head and a tender heart. Mrs. Williams, whom she got into the habit of calling "mother," was a woman who had been trained in the

school of adversity, and had learnt her lessons well. In spirit she had followed the example of those women in the Gospel who brought their children to Jesus that He might bless them.

Jane spent two evenings every week at Mrs. Parkes', and this good lady, while watching the peculiar features of the child's character, induced her to give attention especially to such things as seemed to be most adapted to guide her in the right way, and to guard her against evil. Her constitution, however, proved weak and delicate. It was evident that the disease which had terminated her mother's life was lurking in her system. The purpose to train her as a servant was given up when, at the age of sixteen, she was attacked by bleeding from the lungs. She happily recovered, and it was then resolved to make her a needlewoman. And for this occupation she seemed to be born, for a quicker or cleverer sempstress there could not be. Everything that her eyes saw her hands could make.

She became a living member of the Church of Christ. But she did not know her Saviour merely to enjoy His blessings, but also to do His work. She could not forget her father and brothers, though they had forgotten her. She used to visit her father's family, although her stepmother, who was a careless gay woman, took no great pleasure in the visits of "that canting, methodistical girl." Jane, however,

continued to show her every kindness, for she pitied her poor father and his family. One day she found her stepmother had been taken seriously ill. She stayed to nurse her. She took charge of the household, and set to cleaning the children and putting things in order. Her father, who had given up the sea and become a waterman, was quite astonished at the wonderful change which had turned his house into a comfortable dwelling. Contrary to custom, he began to come home at dusk, and to take his tea with his children, while Jane always took care that there was a newspaper for him, and perhaps a tract beside it, until at last she got him to read the Bible. Nor could her father's wife fail to experience the beneficial influence of this conduct. She recovered slowly, but at death's gate she had learnt to listen to Jane's kind though grave exhortations.

"Ah, child," she often sighed, "you are better than me. I now see what a great sinner I am. You have surely been sent here to show me a better way."

"Ay, dear mother," Jane used to answer, "this is Jesus' love. He found me when I was lost, and now He has sent me to seek for you, that you may be found also."

She also walked regularly once a week to the prison where her youngest brother (the elder one had never been heard of since he sailed to Australia) was undergoing a sentence of five years for having stabbed a

man in a brawl. She obtained permission to spend an hour with him every Wednesday evening, when she read the Bible to him, and prayed with him, and besought him with tears to change his way of life.

And in the neighbourhood where she lived she was an angel of consolation to many an afflicted soul, and a guide to many a wandering sheep. Many an evening she would sit down with a poor mother to help her to mend her children's clothes; and no sooner was it known that Mrs. Williams' Jane was at Mrs. So-and-So's, than a few other women would come with their sewing, and sit down to have a chat, and hear her tell stories. And the stories which she told were such, that the mothers often said that one evening with Jane was worth ten in church.

And now I was on my way to bid her my last farewell. Her weak system, undermined by the treacherous disease which she had inherited, at last broke down under the amount of good work from which she could not be persuaded to desist. I entered her sick-room with heaviness of heart, but my eyes could not possibly preserve their sad look when they met hers. No sooner did she see me than a flash of joy brightened her beautiful but wasted countenance.

"You seem to be very happy," I said, taking a seat by her bedside.

"And why should I not?" asked she, tendering

her hand to me, and pressing mine with a feeling of heartfelt delight. "I must repeat to you what I said to Mrs. Parkes this morning, since you were the means, along with her, under God, of rescuing me from destruction. I ought, at any rate, to let you see the blessed fruits of the good work you did to that little one whom you found friendless and helpless in the street. Here I am lying now, happier than a bride and richer than a queen. Oh, how different would the case have been if Mrs. Parkes had not found me, and if you had not—"

"Do not mention me," I said. "All I have done was to assist that good lady. But let us lay all our thanks and praises at the feet of the Saviour of us all."

"True," she answered. "All of us were alike dead in trespasses and sins; and if we may now rejoice that we live, it is because He hath quickened us, having died for us."

"Just so," I said. "You were in great peril when, as a little helpless child, you stood alone and forsaken in the midst of this great city, which is full of evil and sin. But your condition was not worse than mine, when, though enjoying all the comforts and privileges of social life, I lived without Christ in the world. And that moment when I saw that I was running into eternal death, and that there was a Saviour who invited me to come to Him, was the

same to me as that moment to you when you first heard the voice of the good handmaid of the Lord, who led you to her house."

" And how little was I then aware," she said, " that the greatest blessing a lost human being can desire was to be bestowed upon me ! I remember how miserable I felt when I found that I had lost my brother, and could not return home. How eagerly would I have fled to him, could I have seen him ! And what would, in all likelihood, have become of me if I had found him again ! Nothing but ruin, for time and eternity. I thought then that all my life's happiness depended upon my finding that unhappy young man. And how cordially do I now thank my God that I did not see him again at that time. This, I often think, is a fine illustration of the blindness of the sinner, who clings to the world, its pleasures and attractions, with all his heart, and imagines that to be separated from it would be utter ruin. And when the Lord, in His infinite mercy, takes it from him, he begins crying as I did when my brother was taken from me, and he feels as if the greatest calamity had befallen him. Whereas this is just the means which the Lord uses to make him seek for the treasures which fade not away."

" And what a fulness of love and joy is in store to fill the emptiness of our heart !" I said.

" Oh," she answered, " eternity will be too short to

comprehend it all. How could I have ever learnt how deeply Jesus loved me, when He bore my sins in His precious body on the Cross, had I not been brought out of darkness into His marvellous light? I know that love; and oh, what a blessing! I shall see Him soon, with His pierced hands and feet which have bled for me! I was lost and He found me, and I shall never be lost again!"

In this way the lovely dying one spoke. I felt in her presence how death was really swallowed up in victory, through Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. She died that same week, with a song of thanksgiving on her lips. According to her wish, we inscribed upon her tombstone, "My greatest loss was my greatest gain."

A LECTURE FROM A WINDOW.

A NARROW lane or alley runs off one of the back thoroughfares near Prince's Street, Manchester. It looks dark and gloomy, even in broad daylight, for the houses on both sides are too high to permit the sun even at mid-day to peep in.

I wish to call attention to the two corner houses. The ground-floor of the one on the right-hand side contains only two rooms. These were occupied at the time when my narrative begins by Peter Leonards, a widower of fifty, and his daughters Emmy and Kate, two strong healthy-looking girls of twenty-two and twenty respectively. Peter was a workman in one of the mills, where Kate was also employed from dawn till dusk. Emmy stayed at home to keep the house, to cook the meals, and to mend the clothes. She was a clever sempstress, and, having a good deal of leisure time, she sewed for the neighbourhood. In this way she earned enough to pay for her own

clothing, and to purchase many a bit of finery, of which she was very fond. Girls who are fond of finery and a deal of trimming, are, as a rule, also fond of pleasure and company; for, without these, what would be the use of hanging all that flourish of lace and ribbon, frill and fringe, about one's body? There would be no opportunity for displaying it. Not that Emmy was a flaunting girl: very far from it; but she was fond of a laugh, and a song, and a dance, and her father used to say, "Why should she not enjoy herself in her young years, if she can afford to do so?"

Her sister Kate was at the mill all day. She too was a cheerful girl, but of a calmer, quieter temper. She was rather indifferent to the question of dress. Emmy, indeed, constantly teased her about her old-fashioned bonnet, and gave her the nicknames of "Queen Bess," and "Old Bessy," but Kate took all quite good-humouredly; and there being no opposition or retaliation on her part, the fire of Emmy's teasing often died away from want of fuel. Kate was a kind-hearted, good-natured creature, but with a slight inclination towards melancholy. Her father and sister, at least, set it down to that, but perhaps seriousness was the better word. She felt life to be a *real* thing and not a play, as her sister and most people around her seemed to think it was. She had no objection to fun and sport, and she often wished that people had more leisure to enjoy themselves.

But she could not make out how persons could so entirely forget that there were many poor creatures who never enjoyed themselves, and that there was a great deal of misery in this world of ours. Nor did Emmy deny there was; but then, she thought, it was no use being sad, as that certainly would not alter the case. She reasoned with herself that Cripple Dan, for instance, who never saw the sun in the sky nor a flower in the field, except when wheeled out of the town on a bright summer day once a year or so, was neither the better nor the worse, whether other people who could move their limbs as they liked danced or not. There was some truth in this reasoning, and Kate had nothing to say against it. Still she felt there was untruth in it also, but what that was she could not well make out.

Poor Cripple Dan lived in the opposite corner house. Its ground-floor also contained two rooms, but the front room, which opened into the street, was occupied as a shop, so that only the back room was left to the family to dwell in. This apartment received its light from a window that opened into the narrow lane. The light, however, was scanty and dim, with scarcely any variation all the year round. The family consisted of Dan, a lad of eighteen, his stepmother, Mrs. Baker, and a baby. Dan's mother died when he was scarcely one year old. His father, who was a tailor, continued a widower for several

years, and poor little Danny was placed under the care of a sister, who was only eight years older than himself. This girl, poor thing, handled her little brother very much as though he had been her doll, dropped him sometimes, and occasionally even, for a couple of hours, she would stow him into a corner, that she might have a romp with the children in the street. Little wonder that he came from her hands a crippled sickly boy. She ran away at the age of sixteen, and had never been heard of since. Mr. Baker, calculating that it would be at once cheaper and more social to take a wife than to engage a housekeeper, married a strong robust woman from the country, with whom he lived in peace for several years. At his death she was left with a baby, a boy of eight months, and had also Dan to take care of. Being a somewhat shrewd woman, she turned her front room into a toy and small-wares shop, and made her back room serve the purpose of dwelling, bed, and work-place. All the day it resounded with the stroke of her little hammer, for she earned part of her livelihood by cutting images of pasteboard, which, stuck over with papers of the most brilliant colours, made her shop famous among the juvenile population of the district.

Though rather a rough and boisterous sort of woman, Mrs. Baker was yet at bottom an honest, kind-hearted soul. What she lacked in delicacy of

expression, she made up in tenderness of feeling and firmness of principle. Dan was a burden to her, and no help. Not only was he a cripple and unable to walk one step, but he was also weak, sickly, and needing attention and nursing. Every morning, after having dressed himself in bed, he was carried, like a little child, by his stepmother to the window, where she put him on a wooden stool at the table, which stood at right angles to the sill. There poor Dan sat till she carried him back to his bed in the evening. She gave him his meals regularly, when she had any to herself; for it sometimes happened that the landlord, and the toy-merchant, and the stationer, took away all her earnings, and it was a rule with her, as strict as the laws of the Medes and Persians, never to eat her breakfast until it was paid for. Still, for Dan's sake, she would sometimes pawn some of her stock in trade, and provide him with a herring to pick, which would at the same time keep him occupied for an hour or so, since the poor fellow had nothing to do all the day long.

Indeed it was a great puzzle how to keep Dan busy. It far surpassed Mrs. Baker's sagacity. As he bowed over the table, his head resting upon his hands, and his pale face buried under a thick confused mass of black hair, it was a pitiful sight to witness his emaciated form, which seemed more like that of a boy of twelve than a lad of eighteen. For

hours and hours Dan might thus be seen, turned towards the window, and looking into the narrow, lonely lane, his expression never altering, except perhaps when a bird happened to alight on the sill of the opposite window, or a yelping cur pursued a chicken along the streets. And if there was not much variety for the eyes of the unfortunate young man, neither did his ears enjoy any greater change of impression. His mother either broke the silence of the parlour by the strokes of her hammer, or the baby would fill up the quiet space by his cries, which would again be responded to by sundry rather clamorous annotations from the mother, all of which, however, usually ended in the "little blackguard" being taken out of his cot, kissed passionately, and placed upon the table before Dan, whose task it became to play with it, and keep it silent and cheerful. This, however, was a pastime which was all enjoyment to the cripple, for the baby, as soon as he could grasp, used to seize Dan's hair with both his hands, and pull his head to and fro with such force that mother was at length compelled to come to the rescue. Sometimes, too, a customer would enter the shop, and Dan would sharpen his ears to catch scraps of the conversation. His mother, having resumed her seat, Dan would then ask who it was that had been in. But he gradually dropped this sort of interrogatory, as the answer he invariably received

was, "Somebody you don't know." Now, Mrs. Baker was not destitute of the talent of talkativeness. On the contrary, the baby had to exert its powers to the utmost, and Dan had often to second it by his loud cries, before she could be prevailed upon to dismiss a neighbour with whom she was gossiping in the shop. But her room was the worst place imaginable for a comfortable talk, since she had to keep her hammer at rest if she wanted to wag her tongue. Nor was Dan a very fit subject to converse with. His range of thought was very narrow, scarcely extending beyond that of a child of twelve. He knew hardly anything of the world outside the house, for he very seldom saw it, and he had not been able to make its acquaintance through the medium of books. He could neither read nor write, and his stepmother knew so little of these arts that she was quite indifferent to them.

Still, Dan knew that there was such a thing as reading. In his mother's shop-window there were little books suspended—"The Life of Jack Sheppard," "The Story of Jack the Giant-Killer," for instance—and a parcel of them was kept in store under his bed. His mother would sometimes give him one, and then he might have been seen for hours looking at the coarse woodcuts. But what would most of all excite his curiosity was what the letterpress meant, and how people could make it tell them a story. He

knew most of the stories by heart, for his father used to tell them to him on Sundays. But since his father's death he had heard nothing of them, and he would often think, "I wish I could make those letters speak to me. Oh, if I could read, how it would shorten the long dreary hours for me." And those hours were ten times longer and more dreary to him than they were when his father was alive, for in those days he used to sit at the window of the front room, and look into the bright broad street, where the children were playing, and people passing, and horses and carts rolling along, and where sometimes men came with organs, playing lively tunes. But all those luxuries were now gone, and his place was fixed at the back window, where he could only see that dull, dark, lonely lane. And instead of the songs of the children and the organ tunes, there was nothing but the never-ceasing monotonous clicks of his mother's hammer, and the cries of the fidgetty baby.

Now, while poor Dan was thus spending his days in sad loneliness, apparently destined to wither away unknown and forgotten by everybody except his step-mother, he little thought that there was another person who thought of him and felt for him deeply. Kate, from the earliest time she could recollect, had known that there was a poor creature called Crippled Dan living over there in the corner house. She also

recollected having sometimes seen and talked to him when, as a child, she played on the street in those bright summer days when he usually sat at the open window of the front room. But she had gone to the mill in her twelfth year, and she had lost sight of him for years, and would have forgotten him altogether, had it not become a custom among the women and girls in the neighbourhood never to buy anything at Mrs. Baker's without asking how Dan was;—a manifestation of neighbourly kindness, in regard to which Kate would have been the very last to fail. As, however, she never saw Dan now, Mrs. Baker never asking her friends to step into her back room, he was to her, as to all other people in the neighbourhood, a sort of imaginary being, whom she could not help thinking of as a child of twelve. So one may conceive in some measure her amazement when, one Sunday afternoon, she unexpectedly happened to find herself face to face with him, and saw a young person, whose emaciated and pale face was like that of an old man, while his body was like that of a boy of twelve. It must be kept in mind that Peter Leonards' house being of the same length and construction as Mrs. Baker's, the window of his back room was just opposite to hers, the narrow lane separating them so little that two persons could easily shake hands across. The Sunday referred to was the first bright mild day of spring. Dan had his window open all the day, to

inhale as much of the fresh balmy air as the close place supplied, and to enjoy the merry noise of the children in the street round the corner, for which purpose he was leaning nearly half his length over the sill, and looking fixedly towards the entrance of the lane. Suddenly the opposite window was thrown upward, and Dan's delight and wonder when he found himself in the immediate presence of a nice cheerful-looking girl may be imagined. Kate shrieked, and started back a little, as she thought she saw a ghost in human form. And no wonder, indeed, for the wind had blown his dark long hair all round his head and face, so that it looked very much like a skull under a crape veil.

"Don't be afraid of me; I am Dan," said the cripple, in a kind voice. "And you are Emmy, aren't you?"

"No; my name is Kate," was the gentle reply.

"O yes, I see, you have still that little brown spot under your left eye. And Emmy had three warts on her right hand."

"Oh, they're all gone," said Kate, with a laugh.

"How tall you are," said Dan; "you were such a little girl, when I saw you last! What have you round your neck? That's very nice."

He pointed to her necklace, composed of red beads, and a little gold brooch. It was a very common thing, but looked quite marvellous in Dan's eyes.

"Would you like to see it?" said she, loosing it

from her neck, and handing it to him. He examined it with great curiosity, and as he counted all the beads, it took a long time.

“Have you made it yourself?” asked he.

“O no; I cannot make such things. I bought it at the jeweller’s.”

“What did you pay for it?”

“I really forget,” answered she, cheerfully, re-adjusting the necklace. “How many beads have you counted?”

“Eight times ten, and four.”

“Why, that’s four-and-eighty.”

“Yes, it may be. Don’t know. How much can you count?”

“How much?” repeated Kate, with a laugh; “why I think I could count on and on till my death. There is no end of it.”

“No end of it!” repeated Dan, in a pensive voice.
“No end!”

He appeared sunk in deep thought.

“Can you read?” he asked.

“A little,” answered Kate, slowly. She felt ashamed of herself, poor thing; for since she went to the mill she had not even looked into a book; and what she had learnt before that time was very insignificant indeed.

“Have you got a book? Read something to me. I never heard anybody read.”

"I have no book."

"Stop, I have one," said Dan, taking a copy of "Jack the Giant-Killer" from his table.

"No, not now," answered Kate, kindly. "I will do it next Sunday; I am engaged just now. Do you feel well, Dan?"

"Not very well. I am queer every day; but I am better now, since the weather is so fine."

"What do you do all the day?"

"Nothing; I sit at the window."

"Where is your mother?"

"She is away at a friend's just now, with the baby."

"So you're alone in the house?"

"Yes, since breakfast."

"Then have you got no dinner?"

"Yes, mother left me a piece of a pie."

"Would you like a hot egg?"

Of course this offer was not declined, and in a few minutes Kate reappeared with the luxury, and a cup of tea in addition.

From that day Kate could not help thinking a good deal about poor Dan, and feeling for him. She remembered having once been compelled to stay at home for a week, to recover from an injury received at the mill, and she recollected how dull and dreary those days were, and how slowly the hours used to

creep on. And she wished she could read better, for she might then read a page to Dan from her window. She thought she would try to teach herself first, and when she had made herself familiar with a book, she might go and read it to him. But she had no book, and she did not know how to get a good one.

That same afternoon, while crossing Portland Square, she noticed a crowd listening to an open-air preacher—a venerable-looking man, apparently between fifty and sixty. She involuntarily stopped.

“And now, my friends,” the preacher said, holding a little book in his left hand, which he repeatedly slapped with his right, “this is the book which is able to make you wise unto salvation. It is the Word of God. It is written by the Holy Spirit. It speaks to you of the only Saviour of poor lost sinners, who died for you on the Cross, who loved you even better than your own father or mother, husband or wife, will ever be able to love you. Read this book. It is your only trustworthy guide to eternity. Read it every day, for it is to a poor sinner’s soul what his daily bread is to his body. Read it this evening before you go to bed, for perhaps you will have to give an account to God even before the morrow dawns, since nobody knows the hour of his death,” etc.

The preacher continued for a few sentences in the same strain, after which he closed with a short prayer.

The doxology was sung; the crowd dispersed, and the preacher strode off in the direction of Piccadilly.

"Pray, sir," said Kate, who, having mastered her bashfulness, succeeded in overtaking him, "could you help me to such a book as yours?"

He said he could not do it at the moment, but he requested her to call at his shop the next day. It was a long way from the mill, and Kate had to give up her dinner that she might be at the appointed place in time. But she thought she must make this sacrifice, as she was bent upon having the good book. Of course it must be a Bible, for, though she had never read it, she had often seen it and heard about it.

She found herself at a stationer's of the name of William Lever. She recognised the preacher in Mr. Lever.

"Do you want a Bible, or only a New Testament?" he asked.

Kate was put out. Were there *two* books?

"Pray, sir, which is the better of the two?" she inquired.

Mr. Lever smiled.

"Have you never read the Bible?" asked he, in a kind tone.

"No, sir," she replied.

"Can you read?" he asked.

"A little, not much," she answered, blushing.

“ Well, then, I think you had better buy a New Testament first, and when you have read it through, you may take the whole Bible.”

He gave her a fourpenny New Testament, in large type.

“ Do you know about Jesus ?” asked he, while she produced the coppers from her pocket.

She cast down her eyes, and gave no answer.

“ Have you never heard of Him ?”

“ I have, sir.”

“ Then who is He ?”

“ The Lord in heaven, sir.”

“ Just so. Do you know what He did for you ?”

No answer.

Mr. Lever shook his head. He could not understand this.

“ Then tell me what makes you want to read this book ?” he asked, in a gentle voice. He expected her answer would be: “ Because I feel anxious about the condition of my soul, and desire to know the way of salvation.” He supposed that his sermon of yesterday had roused her out of the sleep of carelessness.

“ Because you said, sir, it was a good book, and that we ought to read it. I was just looking out for a good book, sir, as I want to read a little to a sick neighbour who cannot read at all.”

“ What is his name ?”

“ Cripple Dan, sir.”

Mr. Lever took down the name and address.

"Please, miss," said he kindly, opening the first page of St. Matthew, "would you mind reading a few lines to me?"

It was not without some difficulty that Kate was prevailed upon to pass this examination. But Mr. Lever pressed her so kindly, and, besides, was so winning in his manner, that she could not help looking upon him as a father. So she addressed herself to her arduous task.

"The—bo-boo-book of the gen-gener-general—"

"No."

"Generating."

"No."

"Generation."

"Ay, that's it. Go on."

She went on in the same way, till she got to the names of the genealogy, when she got quite confused.

"That'll do," said Mr. Lever kindly, tapping her on her shoulder. "Those names are so strange, aren't they? But you'll learn them soon, if you continue reading every day."

"Do you think so, sir?" asked Kate, greatly encouraged.

"No doubt you will. But it appears to me, that when reading to your sick crippled neighbour, you had better not begin with this page. I know a page

which tells a few stories of sick and crippled people who were cured by Jesus. I will show it you."

Mr. Lever showed her the fifth chapter of St. Luke, and Kate gratefully put a fold at the page.

That same evening Emmy found Kate busily engaged in deciphering the fifth of St. Luke.

"What in all the world is that? Are you mad, Kate?"

"No, I'm not," answered she with a smile, yet not without a blush.

"Are you going to turn schoolmistress?"

"Yes, something like it. Isn't it a shame, Emmy, that neither of us can read?"

"Well, it is bad enough; but we are too old now to sit down and spell a book. Come along, Kate, to Mrs. Braithwaite's."

"No, not now."

"Jane will be there, and Polly, and Margaret, and her brothers."

"No, not this evening."

"And William promised also to come, and to bring his accordion."

"Did he? Perhaps I will go at nine."

"Eh!" said Emmy, clapping her hands triumphantly, "I knew Willie was needed. I have caught you now."

"Nonsense. I don't care for William," replied Kate,

crimsoning all over, "except that he plays so nicely."

"Of course—only that!" said Emmy, casting a glance into the little glass suspended on the wall, and adjusting her bonnet. Do come by all means. I'll wait till you fetch me."

Kate continued her study. The chapter was by far too long to be got through in one evening. She saw it contained thirty-nine verses. She divided it into three parts, each consisting of thirteen verses, and prescribed to herself the task of reading a part each evening. It took her about an hour to work her way through the first thirteen. She greatly enjoyed it, however. It was so nice, after having tumbled across a score of characters and words which at first had no meaning at all, to find that by gradually going over the same ground a meaning came out, and an intelligible sentence, as it were, shaped itself to her out of the waste of words. It was as if in those letters some invisible spirit were dwelling whom she could make speak to her by a persevering look at the letters. She was so absorbed in her wonderful pursuit that it was with reluctance she shut the book when the clock struck nine. She hurried to Mrs. Braithwaite's, joined in a dance, and heard William play, but this was not nearly so pleasant to her as reading about the fishermen who washed their nets and caught such a great multitude of fishes that their net broke.

Meanwhile Dan had told his mother about his meeting with Kate, and that she had promised to read to him next Sunday. Mrs. Baker was very much pleased. She liked Kate, because she was a kind, affable girl, who never entered her shop without a dainty for the baby, and sometimes, indeed, would even take it out for a walk. Still, Mrs. Baker had never invited Kate to step into her back room, for, to tell the truth, she was ashamed of the poor and disorderly aspect it presented. Dan, too, knew his mother's mind on this point, and so he did not ask her to invite Kate into the room of an evening. He saw that he must patiently wait till next Sunday. How poor Dan counted the days! The hours seemed to creep on twice as slowly as before.

At length the long-wished-for day arrived, and, happily, it was again bright and warm. Dan opened his window immediately after breakfast. Kate's was closed, and it remained so till the church bells had ceased to ring, and the noise of the people going to church had subsided in the street. Then she made her appearance, a smile on her face, and the book in her hand.

"How early you come! that's very kind!" exclaimed Dan, in a tone of joyful surprise.

"I saw your mother go out with the baby," said she, "and so I knew you were alone."

"You have on a different dress from the one you

had on last Sunday. It is not nearly so nice. There were such large bright flowers on the other one."

Kate laughed. She could not tell him that her former dress was her sister's, which she had borrowed because hers was being mended.

"Are you fond of flowers?" asked she.

"O yes! I had a rose last summer, but it is gone. What book have you there?"

"It is a Bible. Do you know it?"

"I have heard of it. People read it in church, don't they? Are there any pictures in it?"

"No, but beautiful stories. I will now read one to you."

Kate read the first thirteen verses of the fifth chapter of St. Luke with a clear voice. She read it without the slightest stammering, though slowly, as a man walks on slippery ground. But this was all the better for Dan, who but for that would not have been able to follow her. He was all ear, and asked her to read it again, and even a third time.

"That's very wonderful," he said, looking up to Kate. "Is it a *true* story?"

"Of course it is."

"Has it *really* happened? *Really*, Kate?"

"Yes, as really as I am speaking to you now. It is *printed*, you see."

"But how *could* Jesus do it?"

"Why, He is the Lord in heaven. Don't you see?"

"But He didn't do it in heaven. There was a lake; or are there lakes in heaven, too, and fisher-people and ships?"

Kate laughed.

"Of course not," she said. "It was on earth, in some far-away country, many, many years ago."

Dan was pensive.

"Then was the Lord on earth in those days, and *not* in heaven?" asked he.

"I think so," answered Kate. "He was a man, you know."

Dan fell again into deep thought.

"Doesn't the Lord make the sun rise every morning?" asked he.

"Yes, He does."

"Then who made the sun rise when He was on earth?"

Kate was silent. This was a question which had never suggested itself to her mind. But soon a thought occurred to her, which in her opinion explained everything.

"Why, I think it is in heaven as it is in our mill. Our master is often away for a week or so, but the mill doesn't stand still for that; he gives his orders before leaving, and business goes on just as if he were present."

Dan seemed satisfied with this bit of theology.

"What a kind Lord He must have been," said

he, after a pause. "I suppose leprosy is a sore thing?"

"I believe it is. People die from it."

"It must be so, for the poor man fell on his face and besought the Lord, and he was cured at once. How wonderful! Do you think He could also have restored my legs and made me healthy?"

"Certainly. He can do all things."

"Oh, I wish He were here!" said Dan, his face brightening up at the thought.

"He would be sure to help you at once," said Kate. A tear glistened in her eye on noticing the enthusiasm which such a slight ray of hope called up in the poor fellow's heart.

"Can't you read any more to me about Jesus?" asked he, in a supplicating voice.

"I cannot now; but I will next Sunday."

Dan drew a deep sigh.

"I wish I could read," said he. "Could you not teach me?"

"Well, I think I could," answered Kate, after a few moments' reflection. "I will think of it, and let you know."

At this moment Mrs. Baker entered the room with the baby in her arms. She thanked Kate for the kindness she had shown to Dan. Kate then asked permission to take the baby out to the fields after dinner, which request was of course gratefully granted.

It was about sunset when Kate returned with the baby, and a large nosegay for Dan. He clapped his hands with wonder and delight. Mrs. Baker put it into a jug of water, and Dan kept it close beside him, and buried his face every two or three minutes in the fragrant flowers.

But, how teach Dan to read? This was the question which Kate pondered over all the day. It could not well be done from the window, as there was no opportunity for that except on Sundays, and with fair weather, and it would be a very long and tedious process. No doubt, the best way would be to teach him in his room in the evening. But she never was in Mrs. Baker's room, and—she should not like to be alone with Dan, supposing his mother went out.

Still, she resolved to propose the thing to Mrs. Baker. That evening, however, just as she was engaged in studying the second thirteen verses of the chapter, a knock was heard at the door. It was Mr. Lever. He was agreeably surprised to find her poring over her open New Testament. He told her that he had been calling at Mrs. Baker's, for the purpose of speaking to Dan; but that she had dismissed him rather abruptly, saying that her son could not see anybody.

"I see you are reading your Bible," said he; "are you making any progress?"

"Oh yes, sir, getting on very nicely. It is so beau-

tiful. But there are a great many things which I do not understand, and Dan put questions to me which I really could not answer."

"Call upon me every Saturday evening at eight," said Mr. Lever, "and I will try to explain all that you don't understand."

"Emmy," said Kate the next morning to her sister, "could you not try to teach Dan to read?"

"Me teach Dan to read!" answered she, bursting into laughter. "I cannot read myself, you silly girl."

"You can. You know the letters of the alphabet at least, and you could teach him them. You are at home all day, and you could easily find an hour to speak to him from the window."

"Ridiculous! We should soon have a mob crowding the lane. Why don't you go to him yourself in the evening?"

"Why, because you know Mrs. Baker never allows people into her back room."

"Well, if *she* doesn't care for Dan's being able to read, why should *we*?"

"Because Dan does. Poor fellow! he sits all the day alone at that dull window. If he could read, it would so cheer up his dreary hours."

"Poor fellow!" repeated Emmy. "And he never comes out to take a draught of fresh air, I'm sure."

"I often thought of that, too. The weather is so

fine, and I pity the poor fellow, who never sees sun nor moon. His father used to wheel him out once or twice in a summer; but since he died, I am afraid he will be buried alive behind his window all the year round."

"Tell you what. Ask William to wheel him out next Sunday. He will do anything if *you* ask him."

Kate blushed. Emmy spoke more of the truth than even she knew herself; for William had just a few days before asked her to marry him, and though she had not yet made a promise, he knew that she looked on him with affection. William was a respectable young man. He was porter in a large establishment, and remarkably well-educated, taking into consideration the class he belonged to. He could sing beautifully, and could accompany his singing on the accordion.

Who can picture the joy of Dan when one evening his mother told him that Kate's sweetheart, William (for that William should marry Kate one day had been long since settled in Mrs. Baker's shop), had offered to wheel him out to the fields next Sunday afternoon! Tears actually sprang into his eyes, and he could not sleep that night from thinking of it. Kate of course gave him his lecture in the forenoon, and could now tell him many things which Mr. Lever had explained to her the night before. This time she read of the man who was taken with palsy, and was

let down with his couch through the roof before Jesus, who not only cured him, but said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Dan could not be satisfied with hearing this story, though it was read to him again and again. He drank it in as a thirsty soul drinks in a fresh draught of water. He thought that the paralysed man was just such a one as himself, unable to walk, and poor and miserable.

"And what does it mean, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee?'"

"That man had sinned against God," answered Kate, remembering what Mr. Lever had said to her about it. "He had often done wrong, and spoken evil words, and thought evil thoughts; and he was afraid that God would punish him for it after his death. But Jesus forgave him all those sins, so that the poor man knew he was not to be punished, and that God would take him up into heaven after his death."

"How glorious!" said Dan. "I believe that I have often sinned too. Have you, Kate?"

"I believe I have," said Kate, gravely. "We are all sinners, you know."

Dan fell into deep thought, as he often did. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," he repeated, as though speaking to himself. "Those words speak of great love and kindness."

"But *you* don't often sin, I'm sure," said Kate. "How could you? You always stay at home."

“ I got angry, and knocked baby this morning,” answered he, “ because it pulled my hair. And I was cross to mother, because she put me to bed earlier than she ought to have done last night. And when mother called me a rascal, I said, ‘ Confound it ! ’ ”

“ Oh ! that was very bad,” said Kate, scarcely able to repress a laugh.

“ Yes, it was. I am sure Jesus would have rebuked me had He witnessed it. Oh ! I wish He would say to me also, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee. ’ ”

At three o'clock William, with a little invalid's carriage, made his appearance at the door. He stepped into the shop, and Mrs. Baker took Dan into her arms to carry him out. She had great difficulty, however, in getting him through the rather narrow doorway ; and William, noticing her struggle, hastened to her assistance, and thus they managed to get Dan into the little carriage. Kate was one of the party, and while William pulled the carriage she walked at his side, talking alternately with him and with Dan. It was a charming day ; and when, having got out of the town, the cripple saw the trees and shrubs clad with the fresh verdure of spring, and the cattle browsing in the sunshine on the flowery grass carpet ; and when he heard the birds warble in the young foliage ; and when he inhaled the fresh, balmy, invigorating air, pouring fresh life into his veins,—he sat in his

carriage lost in wonder and with folded hands, unable to utter a word, except, "Oh ! how wonderful !"

Upon returning to Mrs. Baker's house, William took Dan by the arms, Kate lifted his feet, and thus they carried him into the shop. Mrs. Baker stepped out of her back room, and was evidently not a little put about. There was no help for it, however. She felt she must this time open the door of her sanctuary, and allow the strangers to carry their burden to its proper place. She made the best of things that she could. She forced her face into a kind smile, and thanked them for the trouble they had taken. When they had put down Dan on his stool near the window, she of course could not forbear kindly inviting them to sit down and rest a little, after their walk and charitable Sunday labour. They gladly accepted her invitation, and she made tea. They had a nice chat, Mrs. Baker being in no lack of subjects. Dan could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw this nice tea-party in his mother's back room. Such a Sunday as this, he thought, had never before dawned upon Manchester.

"I am surprised that you can manage so well in this room," said Kate, in a confidential tone, to Mrs. Baker.

"Oh, pray don't look about," said Mrs. Baker, a smile and a frown combating each other on her face. "I must do everything myself, you know, having no help whatever."

And certainly there was plenty of evidence that this was no place where many hands found work to do. It served at once, as a dwelling-room for three individuals, as a bed-room, and a kitchen, and a store-room for shop articles, and a workshop besides ; and all within a space of a very few feet. No wonder that it did not look clean and orderly. Pots and pans, and parcels and tools, were heaped up in strange confusion in the corners and alongside the walls. The few articles of furniture visible were in great need of repair. Kate now fully understood why Mrs. Baker did not like to have anybody enter here. She fancied she herself would have been quite as exclusive had the case been her own. She knew that Mrs. Baker was not a dirty, slovenly woman, but she also knew that it was quite impossible for even a strong robust woman to overtake so much.

There was one article which was too conspicuous not to attract Kate's attention whenever she turned her eyes in its direction. It was the counterpane that covered the bed. It was very much torn, and Mrs. Baker, who noticed that Kate could not help seeing it, thought it incumbent on her to give an explanation of its state. It *was* such a fine strong counterpane, but unhappily baby had contrived to discover a little hole, and putting its little fingers into it had torn it so in her absence, and she *could* not find

one moment to take needle and thread in her hand, though she had plenty in her shop.

“Tell you what, ma’am,” said Kate, “you cannot possibly attend to that; you have too much on hand. But I will come some evening and help you, and so will Emmy, I have no doubt, for she is a capital sempstress, you know.”

While this conversation was going on between the women, William had a chat with Dan.

“Well,” he then said, turning to Kate, “if you come here to-morrow evening with your needle, I will come with a book to teach Dan reading.”

Dan clapped his hands, Mrs. Baker smiled, and the next evening the two friends were seen sitting at their work. And William had his accordion with him, and when Dan had successfully gone through his first lesson, he was rewarded with a tune.

From that time the window lectures ceased. It was amazing to witness Dan’s progress in reading. No wonder, for he had the whole day to himself, and he did nothing else from dawn till dusk. In the course of two months he could read as fluently as William himself, and far better than Kate, notwithstanding that she exercised herself every evening, except when she was at Mrs. Baker’s mending the clothes, and tidying the room, and doing a great many little things which nobody told her to do save her own kind heart.

Twelve months passed away, and another spring called Nature up from her winter sleep. No sooner did the south wind breathe life and joy into town and country, than Dan opened his window as usual. One Sunday morning he found Kate's window opened, and heard a conversation between the two sisters. It was conducted in a very animated spirit, especially on the part of Emmy. She was quite in a rage. Her anger regarded a friend who had grossly insulted her on the previous evening.

"And you know," said she to Kate, "I made that bonnet with blue ribbons for her, and charged nothing, as I knew she could not well afford it. Well, she had it on last night, and with that same bonnet on her head she called me a bad name."

"Shame!" said Kate. "Why, send her your bill."

"Yes, I will," cried Emmy.

"Don't!" cried a voice from the opposite window.

"Oh, that's Dan!" whispered the girls. Emmy could not help smiling. It was so odd.

"Why not?" asked Emmy, putting her head out at the window.

"Because it is in the book, Recompense to no man evil for evil," said Dan; "and didn't the Lord say, If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses? Look, here it is," said he, producing his Bible, and pointing with his finger to the text.

Emmy was silent. She left the room.

"How could you give such an advice to Emmy?" said Dan to Kate. "Don't you know that Jesus bids us love our enemies?"

Kate looked ashamed. "Why," said she, "Mary Hennell treated her very badly."

"Kate," said Dan, in a kind but grave tone, "I am afraid you have not yet begun to do what the book tells us. Has not the Lord in heaven freely forgiven us all our sins?"

"He has," whispered Kate.

"Then, how could you speak to your sister in that way? If God were to send you His bill, what would you do?"

Kate felt her eyes getting moist.

"William," said she that evening to her friend, "I believe Dan is ahead of us all."

"And no mistake," said William. "'Many that are last shall be first,' and so it is with him."

Another twelve months elapsed, and a young married couple were seen standing in the cemetery near a freshly-dug grave. It was Dan's, and the couple were William and Kate.

"Do you know what his last words were?" said Kate.

"I do not."

"'Come, blessed Jesus.'"

They walked away in silence.

“ Kate,” said William, when they had entered their own room, “ I think I will take a pencil, and write on the wall above the fire-place, ‘ As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’ ”

“COFFEE-POT SAM.”

I DARE say, my reader, you have often got out of temper when, coming up Cheapside or the Strand, or any other of those crowded thoroughfares which you pass ten or twenty times a-week on your way to and from your office, you find that a large hoarding has been erected, occupying the whole of the pavement at one of the narrowest points. Your irritation, of course, is by no means relieved when you notice, further, that an auxiliary wooden foot-path—very narrow, very dirty, and very uncomfortable—has been laid down, over which, during the three or four ensuing months, you will every day have to puff and struggle, running the gloomy risk of losing your train, or of reaching home squeezed to the consistency of a lemon, or perhaps striped like a zebra. However, you must submit: and reflecting that your own respectable self is not exempt from the necessity of repair, as proved by many a little

doctor's bill, or even by more agreeable recollections of trips taken to the sea-side or the Alps, you try to meet this necessary evil with some cheerfulness of spirit. Week after week passes on, and you do not murmur, being only too well aware that neither frown nor smile will help you a single inch. And sometimes, at the moment you are passing, the door in the hoarding may happen to be open, and you cannot help stopping, just to satisfy your curiosity as to why the work is proceeding so slowly, and what prospect there is of the street being early cleared. A strange view presents itself. The eye meets a wide area of desolation, sufficient to suggest the idea of Macaulay's New Zealander, and to excite a faint image of what he is expected to witness when looking down from London Bridge upon the ruins of London. It is a sort of wild Alpine scene, made up of stones and rubbish. There are hills and glens, and ravines and bridges, very picturesque and very dangerous looking. Large, thick beams lie scattered in wild confusion across the precipices, like sturdy oaks struck down by lightning. Two sinewy athletes, broad and muscular, and with gin-tinctured faces, make an effort to relieve the dusty parchedness of the scene by an attempt at a cascade, a pump-handle being wrought up and down with restless regularity. You gratefully hear the rush of water, and fancy yourself near Schaffhausen. At a dis-

tance, a score of other labourers, with either pickaxe or spade in hand, labour in some dark cavern, aided by the fantastic glare of a furnace, upon which a pot filled with some awful-looking liquid is boiling. Half a dozen others, on the top of one of the dust-hills, give you the idea of an avalanche, by throwing basketfuls of rubbish down an inclined plane. Clouds of dust on a sudden wrap the whole scene in a haze, like what tourists tell us they witness from the top of the Righi or of the Jungfrau. Soon, however, the evanescent veil passes away, and you are permitted to enjoy the panorama, with all the riches of its manifold peculiarities.

While thus looking and dreaming, in the winking sun heat, it may be you are on a sudden awakened by a push from behind, and the cry, "Mind there!" You turn round and find your shoulder under the frothy mouth of a cart-horse, which alone was wanted to complete the picturesqueness of the scenery. But to you it is a messenger, reminding you that the Bank closes at three, and that what you have been gazing at is but rubbish. So you resume your walk, and looking at the matter in the light of reality, you cannot help feeling thankful for not having been compelled to take your place among the men of whose life you just now got a glimpse: for, despite the poetical suggestions which a minute ago visited you, you feel that no life could well be more prosaic,

monotonous, and depressing than that which from dawn till dusk is spent in handling matter in its coarsest possible form, and in seeing nothing the whole day but rubbish and desolation. You think how the spirit and life in those poor people must at length be totally buried under those awful mountains of dirt and dust; and, sad as the thought is, you really cannot wonder that they go to the public-house every now and then to obtain a little exciting stimulus, and having got that, bruise each other's faces, for what they call "a bit of fun."

But you would be sadly mistaken if you supposed that there were no exceptions to this sort of life among these men. Man's spirit *cannot* be altogether buried, and if sometimes by rude violence it is thrust into the grave, it will rise again on the third day. It is not born of matter, and it cannot die through the power of matter either. If the man you put into the magnificently carved pulpit of some splendid cathedral has brought no true spirit with him, he certainly will not get it there, even though the building be a masterpiece of architecture, the pillars patterns of elegance, and the stained-glass windows marvels of painting. Again, if you put a man down on a heap of rubbish, pick-axe in hand, and looking for all the world like a walking pillar of lime, and if he has got an eye for the invisible things of God, and a heart to feel his all-including love, his words will

be true music, and his deeds true poetry, though the dust should often choke his utterance, a worm-eaten bench be his chair, and a broken stone his table.

The truth of this was proved a few years ago by Samuel Brown, a common operative, who worked, with a score of others of his class, at an extensive "job" in Oxford Street. Samuel was a good fellow, not the sharpest or quickest of the band perhaps, but steady and zealous in his work, of a strong robust constitution, and "true as gold." In his speech there was something dry and curt, something extraordinarily phlegmatic, as indeed there was in the whole of his appearance. But if you had chanced to speak a couple of minutes to him, you would have discovered that he had a warm heart, and that a great deal of true good humour shone through those dullish eyes, and played through the features of that stern-looking face, beautifully softening it at times. That he was a man of character, with the courage to think for himself, and to stand out against public opinion where he deemed it wrong, could not be doubted. He was the only one of the band who never drank ale or spirits. While his comrades spent their leisure time at the public-house, Samuel took his little tin kettle from the corner where he put it every morning, with his jacket over it. In the one pocket of his jacket were two thick pieces of bread, with a slice of ham between them, and in the other a little Bible

and a few tracts wrapt in a checkered handkerchief. He would boil his tea or coffee in the kettle, and taking out his big sandwich, sit down where he liked best—sure that nobody would dispute his place with him. For this his comrades nicknamed him "Coffee-pot Sam." But he felt not a straw the less happy for all that when drinking his steaming coffee, and reading a passage of the Gospel, or glancing over a newspaper.

"You are the queerest chap I ever saw in my life," said one of his comrades, who went by the name of "Rough Dick," one day, while preparing to go to the public-house, where the rest of the band had already gone. Now Rough Dick was not exactly a bad fellow, although rather boisterous and quarrelsome, owing to the gin, of which he was never wholly free. Being a strong muscular fellow, and besides a first-rate pugilist, he was generally dreaded by the gang. Samuel was then sitting on a plank, engaged in reading. "You are the queerest sort of chap I ever saw in my life," said Dick, pulling the paper roughly out of Samuel's hand. "What in all the world are you stuffing your brains with every day?"

Samuel looked up quite calmly, but made no effort to get the paper back. Dick read the heading of a tract—"Are you prepared to die?"

"Bah!" he said, flinging down the leaf. "That's only fit for old wives."

"Of course it is," said Samuel, drily, "for old wives will die soon at any rate. But it is also for you and me, my lad. Death is a whimsical fellow, you know. He may pass old wives to take the like o' us first. I think it would be as well for you to take this little piece of paper back again, and read it at home, if you don't want to read it now."

"What? Me?" cried Dick, laughing loudly. "Do you want *me* to read that —— humbug?"

"You had better not curse it before you have read it," Samuel said in a serious tone. "It simply puts a question, as you see, which concerns you and me very closely. Or *are* you already prepared to die?"

"I'll tell you what I am prepared for," Dick said, imitating the movement of drinking with his hand. "I will take one this time that will make the whole of London dance before my eyes."

"And suppose death came to you at that moment," said Samuel: "I am afraid your dancing would not be of a very merry sort. Moreover, Dick," he added, in a gentle tone, "you have a wife and children to care for."

"Mind your own business," said Dick, now getting angry. "You are in want of a black eye, I think."

"Not very particularly," answered Samuel.

"You're the only fellow of the gang who has never had one from me," cried Dick loudly.

"Don't know," answered Samuel calmly, and taking up the tract which Dick had flung down.

"Well, then, I'll give you one now," said Dick, clenching his fists and taking position. "Get up, I say, and behave like a man."

"I wont fight," said Samuel, looking into the tract.

"You must," roared Dick, with a horrid oath.

Before Samuel could rise up Dick's fist had visited his left eye with such force that he felt as if it had been turned into a fiery coal. But, quick almost as lightning, he caught hold of Dick's legs, and before a second blow could be dealt, the ruffian was grovelling in the rubbish, where, of course, he had not come down gently by any means. He rose up with a groan, and looking at Samuel with an expression of amazement, he skulked off, muttering something between his teeth, which Samuel did not care either to hear or to understand.

When the work-people returned, Dick was not with them. Samuel became anxious. He was afraid Dick's tumble might have been too much for him, half-drunk as he then was.

"Where's Rough Dick?" he asked of one of his comrades.

"At the public-house, and snoring like a dog," was the answer; "we could not get him awake."

Dick's work was the boiling of the pitch. There was nobody now looking after it, and considerable damage was sure to ensue, which Dick would, of

course, have to pay for. So Samuel went from time to time to see to it, despite his now having only one eye at his disposal.

Two hours elapsed before Dick came back. He walked up to the spot rather hurriedly, and to his astonishment found the furnace all right, and Samuel stirring the pitch.

"Here," said Samuel drily, handing him the stick; "don't be so long another time."

He was off before Dick could say a single word, but Dick felt very much as though the whole furnace had been poured upon his head.

"I'll take care not give *him* another black eye, at all events," he muttered to himself. Debased as he was, he now felt that there was something genuine in "Coffee-pot Sam." Ever after, Samuel had a surprising power over Rough Dick; so much so, indeed, that frequently when he was quite unmanageable, and the others scarcely dared to approach him, Samuel was called to put him to rights. On such occasions Samuel used simply to take Dick's ear between his finger and thumb, and leading him off like a lamb, put him down on a bench, saying, "Be quiet, sir; don't stir, I tell you!" And those who saw it would think: "After all, there's more power in Sam's coffee-pot than in all the pewter-pots in London!"

Still, to tease Samuel by playing all sorts of tricks

upon him was the amusement of some, especially the younger members of the band. Kind-hearted and harmless as he was, he often gave them painful reproofs, simply by not behaving as they behaved, and sometimes too by plainly telling them truths which they did not like to hear. One would suppose that nothing in the world could be looked upon as less harmful than to sit down and take a cup of coffee, eat a piece of bread, and glance over a page or two of print. Yet it was owing simply to this that Samuel was actually a thorn in the flesh to many of them. And no wonder. Though he spoke but little, and never preached at his companions, he was nevertheless an ever-present witness against their intemperance, filthy talk, and coarse habits. He was a living proof that it was possible to be strong without strong drink, eloquent without swearing, and cheerful without the aid of bad songs. Nor was this logic of life and action altogether lost upon those who witnessed it, as was demonstrated by the case of William Morgan, who went among the band by the name of "Jolly Bill."

One day Jolly Bill came up to Samuel, who was reading as usual.

"Coffee-pot," said he, with an ironical expression in his face, and holding up his pocket-handkerchief, in which something was evidently wrapped up, "I've something for you. Guess what it is!"

Samuel cast a curious glance at the concealed object. It looked rather bulky.

"How can I know?" he said.

"Guess!"

"Is it something to eat?"

"No, it ain't that."

"Is it a book?"

"No, nor that neither."

Samuel looked again, this time more carefully.

"It's something living," he said; "a kitten, perhaps."

"No, it isn't."

"A puppy, then?"

"Yes," said Bill, uncovering the little creature and dropping it on Samuel's knee. It was an exceedingly ugly little beast, of a dirty yellowish hue. It had a plump bull-head, scarcely a body at all, and no tail to speak of.

"Poor little thing!" said Samuel, taking the shivering animal in his hands. "What do you want me to do with it?"

"Why, don't you see?" said Bill. "Give it a training, to be sure, and you'll have a dog to lead you when you get blind."

"I don't want to be blind," said Samuel, holding the puppy against his cheek.

"I daresay not," was the reply; "but you *will* be blind soon, depend upon it. You'll soon have your

eyes destroyed with all that reading o' yours, as my own mother did, who used to read books and tracts day and night till she got as blind as a mole."

"Is your mother blind?" said Samuel in a compassionate tone. "What's her age?"

"Fifty-two, or thereabout, I think," answered Bill, in a more serious voice. "Poor body! it's hard for her. It's now two years since she lost the sight of her right eye, and six months later her left eye was useless too."

"Did you see the doctor about it?"

"Of course we did. She was a month in the hospital; but it was no use."

"That's very sad. Is she living with you?"

"Yes, in course. She's my housekeeper, you know."

"So you are unmarried?"

"I am."

"Then is she quite alone in the house while you are at work?"

"Of course she is; but she manages things wonderfully well. You could hardly believe it, if you saw her cutting bread and making tea, or dusting the room. You would scarcely take her for a blind person if you did not know it. Of course she can't cook very well, nor can she walk out to the shops; but she often gets her dinner with a neighbour. They all pity her, and are fond of her, and there's always a girl about willing to run an errand for her."

"She must feel lonely," said Samuel. "And then it's always a dangerous thing to leave a blind person alone in a house. Could you not get a little girl to help her?"

"Can't afford it," said Bill gravely, shaking his head and contracting his brow.

"Why, you earn as much as I do," said Samuel, "and I support a wife and six children."

Bill was silent.

"Billy, Billy!" said Samuel, lifting up his forefinger, "you could afford to give her two servants if you only left the public-house alone."

"All very well for you, who have a wife and family," said Bill doggedly; "but where am I to go in the evenings? You can't expect me to sit down with a blind person the whole night' after a hard day's labour."

"Why not?", asked Samuel. "Couldn't you read something to her? You said she was fond o' readin', and—she's your mother."

"Pshaw! you want me to get blind too, do you? That's too bad. One blind person's enough in a family, I should think. Besides, when I take up a book, I dose before I read ten words."

"Of course you do," said Samuel, in a soft but serious tone; "of course you do, after having been drinking ale all the day."

"You're a —— coffee-pot," answered Bill, striding

off. Having walked a few yards, he stopped, and, turning round, cried: "I say, Coffee, mind the dog. You'll want it soon."

Samuel took the puppy home. Upon entering his room, he found his wife and children as usual waiting him for supper. A fine girl of fourteen, a boy of twelve, and two girls of eight and six, were sitting round the table, while two little boys were already in bed.

"There's father!" was the unanimous expression. "Now, mother, now for the dumplings!"

Samuel gave his wife a kiss.

"Stop a minute," he said, "I have brought you a guest."

"He put the puppy on the table, and the whole party broke into laughter when they saw the queer little animal sprawling about.

"What an ugly little thing," cried Jane, the eldest girl, spreading out both her hands.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Fred; "it's lost its tail: how funny."

At this juncture little Mary got frightened, and began crying.

"Don't cry," Samuel said, taking her up kindly on his knee, "it won't do you any harm. It is a nice little creature."

Thereupon he put the puppy before her, and soon prevailed upon her to stroke it gently with her little hand.

"But where did you get it, dear?" asked his wife, meanwhile putting down the dish with the dumplings.

Samuel told his story.

"And now," he said to Jane, "I'll entrust the puppy to you. It is not a pretty thing, but it belongs to a very sagacious and docile race: you can teach it almost anything. Try and train it well, make it tidy and obedient, and when you have done that I'll tell you what to do then."

The very next evening Samuel, on taking up his jacket and little kettle to go home, found himself in an awkward predicament. The sleeves of his jacket were sewn up from the very shoulders to the cuffs; so also were the pockets. Fortunately he had a knife, but as it was dark, and every caution had to be taken not to cut the material, it took him fully half an hour before he could put the jacket on. This caused considerable disappointment and concern to his family, and his good wife was only too happy to find that a trick, and no accident, was the cause of his delay, and that the shot had this time been aimed at his jacket sleeves, and not his eyes. Jane took her mother's scissors, and cut up the pockets. The little Bible and the tracts were gone, and in their stead Jane pulled out of one pocket a mass of pebbles, potato skins, and old corks, and from the other a bundle of printed papers. John at once took some of the papers, and began reading aloud:—

" 'The merry life of Jolly Johnnie, a new song, to be sung by all the jolly Johnnies—' "

"Give those papers to me," said Samuel, before John could look at another.

John obeyed, though reluctantly. He was curious to know the contents of the other papers. They seemed to him so funny!

Samuel examined the bundle minutely. The papers were all of the same stamp. Among them was a bit of a shoemaker's bill, upon which was written the name of William Morgan.

"I thought Bill was at the bottom of it," said Samuel to himself. "I shall not read his papers, but I hope he will yet read mine."

The next morning he found his little Bible and the tracts safe in his own corner. Samuel met Bill several times that day, Bill casting waggish looks at him, Samuel taking no notice of what had been done.

"Jane," he said to his daughter that evening, "put on your bonnet. We'll call on Bill's blind mother."

They entered a dark room.

"Who's there?" inquired a female voice.

"Are you Mrs. Morgan?" asked Samuel.

"That's my name, sir?"

"Is your son in?"

"He is not, sir."

"Will he be long?"

"Can't tell. It may be midnight or later; not

much earlier, at any rate. Could you not tell me what you want ?”

“ Well, yes. My name is Samuel Brown. Bill and I work together in Oxford Street. I’ve got a parcel which belongs to him.”

“ One minute, please, and I’ll light a candle. I’m blind, you know.”

A stirring was heard in the corner, and soon the sound of a press opening, then the scratch of a lucifer match over a rough object. A tall figure became faintly visible. She was trying to light a candle which she held in her left hand. Samuel stepped forward, but before he could give her any assistance, the candle burned brightly. It was wonderful to see how cleverly the blind creature managed it all, and how cautiously she threw the match into the fireplace. Still Samuel could not help seeing that it was very dangerous for her to be so lonely.

The little room had evidently seen better days, but now bore signs of poverty and neglect. It was not very dirty, it is true ; but the cobwebs hanging from the ceiling and down the walls at several spots, showed clearly it was kept in order more by the touch than by the sight.

Having seated themselves at the good woman’s request, Samuel expressed his compassion for her in her sore affliction. Mrs. Morgan then told him very simply her whole story. Expressions occurred in the

course of her narrative proving that she was no stranger to the Gospel.

"What Bill told you about reading being the cause of my blindness is all nonsense," she said. "Much to my grief he got into the habit of coming home very late, often after midnight, and as I never could go to bed before he was safe home, I often passed the long hours in reading; and of course he used to find me doing so when he came home. But the loss of my eyes was owing to erysipelas, as I have told you; I am thankful I was able to read so much, as it is a source of great comfort to me in these dreary, lonely days."

"What a blessing that the eyes of your mind were opened before those of your body were shut!" Samuel observed. "If you cannot see men on earth, you can at least see One seated in heaven."

At these words the good woman's face brightened all over with joy.

"Ay, sir, that's it," she said; "I shall not be blind for ever. He who in His good mercy opened the eyes of my soul, will also one day give me new eyes to behold His glory in heaven."

"Just so," said Samuel; "some have eyes, and yet are blind; and others have no eyes, and yet see. Blind Bartimeus could see the Son of David, whom the sharp Pharisees saw not. The man who was blind from his birth, and whose vision the Lord restored by

anointing his eyes with the clay spittle, obtained the outward eyesight because his inner eye was clear."

"Oh, I often, often think of that!" said the woman. "I asked Bill to read it to me, but he never did it."

"Well, perhaps you will let me read it to you," said Samuel; "or maybe Jane, my daughter, will read it for us. Now Jane," he added, handing her his little Bible, "read as clearly and distinctly as you can."

Jane turned up the 9th of John, and read it. No minister could have done so better or more touchingly. She knew it by heart.

"Delightful! What a treat!" cried the blind woman. "How nicely she reads!"

"She might have done even better than that," said Samuel; "but she is a little shy, you know. If you would like to hear her read, and if you can understand her, she might often come and read a chapter to you. We don't live far from this—only about five minutes' walk; and I will sometimes come myself and see you as well."

Mrs. Morgan could scarcely find words to express her thanks. Samuel now gently led her on to speak of her present experiences and her hopes; and then took his leave.

It was beyond midnight before Bill came home. His mother gave him the parcel, and told all about the pleasant visit from Samuel.

“ Ah, Coffee-pot !” he exclaimed in astonishment.

“ Coffee !” said his mother. “ You know, Bill, I have no coffee for you *now*—it is so very late !”

“ Well, never mind,” he muttered ; and away he went to bed, very likely to sleep off the effects of gin.

It soon became a nice change to Jane to spend a couple of hours twice a week with Mrs. Morgan, reading to her and helping her. Sometimes, too, Samuel would go and have a chat with the blind old woman. And it would be wrong not to tell that one morning Jane entered Mrs. Morgan’s room fully prepared to wage war with the cobwebs on the roof and on the walls ; and that in the evening of the same day her father brought long steps and a brush, and a pot full of paste, and put all the paper right upon the worn walls.

“ Will you be at our house to-night ?” Bill asked of Samuel one day.

“ Yes, I think I will,” was the reply.

Samuel, rather to his surprise, found Bill at home that evening. An interesting conversation took place between Samuel and the poor mother, to which Bill listened with marked attention. Though he scarce ventured a word himself, yet he seemed interested in it. Jane also read, and he noticed the intense pleasure it gave his mother. When Samuel and Jane left, he observed that they were good people indeed, and

that he had spent a very pleasant evening. As it was already half-past nine, he said he would not go out of doors again that night. So, after having taken a little bit of supper, and quietly smoked a pipe, he went to bed. This was the first time for many, many months that blind Mrs. Morgan had locked the door at such an early hour.

The two following evenings Bill was late as usual. Habit was strong; and the door of the public-house, like the drunken mouths it admitted, was constantly open; but on the third night Jane was there, and read to his mother, and he was present again. The next evening he thought he had better go home at once, and not wander to *The Fountain*, where he was not wanted at all. The reflection that his poor mother was quite alone strengthened the good resolve. And though he was not a great scholar, and could not read so well as little Jane, yet he would try. He now felt ashamed that other people had come into his house to do what he saw he ought to have done himself. Mrs. Morgan for a time thought she was dreaming, when soon after dusk Bill regularly came home, and after having taken his supper, took the Bible, and said: "Now, mother, if you have no objection I will read a chapter to you." But the good woman, to her unspeakable joy, soon found that she was not dreaming, though things were changed for the better in such a manner as she had hardly hoped, or even dreamt.

The purse is a good metronome: it tells pretty correctly how time is measured or divided by a working man, or indeed any man. Bill soon experienced a change in his purse, too. He found that he could easily afford to pay a girl a shilling a week and her meals to make things comfortable at home. He spoke about this to Samuel. After some talk, during which they had wandered away a little from the theme they started with, Morgan at length relieved himself by saying that he knew no better girl than Jane. Samuel understood him; and as he could not fancy a better mistress for Jane than Mrs. Morgan would be, the thing was soon settled.

On an early evening Samuel and his wife accompanied Jane to Mrs. Morgan's, to introduce her to her new situation. Bill and his mother were already waiting them, with coffee and cake on the table. The guests having been seated, Bill, who was sharp in his own way, noticed that Jane had brought something under her cloak.

"What have you got there?" he asked.

"Guess," said Jane, smiling.

"How can I know?" he replied. "Perhaps a pair of shoes?"

"No, it isn't that," she said, with a waggish shake of the head.

"A book?"

"No," she replied, trying this time to look grave.

"A doll, then?"

"A doll!" Jane repeated, in a tone of affected displeasure.

Just at this moment a sound from under Jane's cloak solved the problem.

"What! a dog?" cried Bill.

Out jumped poor puppy, as ugly as ever, it is true, but now grown much larger. Exceedingly kind and cheerful, he sprang up on everybody, and licked everybody's hands. The party was delighted.

Mrs. Morgan begged they would let her touch the little creature. And so she took puppy on her knee, and stroked it kindly all over, while it, by way of grateful return, licked the old wrinkled face, which did not by any means lack expression.

"Just so," said Samuel; "that's exactly what you brought it for, is it not, Jane? Bill gave it to me six months ago to get trained for a blind person. It hasn't completed its education yet; but Jane will carefully finish it off here, I daresay."

Bill looked a little grave; and, after a pause, he said—

"Mother, didn't we read the other day words like these: 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto you for good?'"

"Ay, lad; it was in the story of Joseph."

"I've been thinking about these words of late," said Bill.

Very probably something glistened in Bill's eyes as he said this, but nobody chanced to notice it, and a minute after he turned round to pat puppy, which was quietly lying in his mother's lap.

Henceforward Bill was Samuel's staunch friend. He very soon lost the epithet of "Jolly" which had been attached to him; and he also cast off the ill habit of which it was the sign, as the serpent casts its encumbering skin. His behaviour, now proper and temperate, made the epithet, of course, quite unsuitable any longer. Nor had Samuel few friends among the band. Such manifestations of his noble character as Rough Dick and Bill had witnessed, did not fail to gain the esteem and kind feeling of those rough fellows, who will yield to the logic of a kind act when nothing else will impress them. Indeed, there were few who did not like "Sam."

Evidence of this was conclusively shown one day, when a worthless lad, who went by the name of "Red Bob," tried to indulge his propensity for low malicious jokes at the expense of "Coffee-pot Sam." Bob killed a mouse; and, stealing to the corner where Samuel's jacket lay, took out the customary sandwich, and put the dead animal between the slices of bread. No sooner, however, had he done this, than a very rough fellow, "Pickled Jam," who had noticed his doings, came up, seized him by the collar, and boxed his ears most unmercifully. The lad's screams brought

half a dozen of the work-people to the spot. When "Jam" told them what "Red Bob" had done, and showed them the dead mouse in Samuel's sandwich, they with one consent pounced upon Bob, and actually kicked him off the works. The case was soon known to the whole band, and there was not one who did not say—"Well done, Jammie, you served him right. We'll take care he shan't come back again."

Now Bob was a nephew of the overseer, to whom he told his own version of what had happened, and asked him to go along with him to the work, as he had not the courage to return alone. But notwithstanding all this, and the natural wish to try to stand well with the overseer, no sooner had uncle and nephew made their appearance, than "Rough Dick," who happened to be nearest the entrance, ran up to his companions to tell them who were coming. The whole band moved together to meet the overseer and the lad.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Dick, "but that lad can't be admitted."

"Who are *you*?" said the overseer, imperiously. "Are *you* the master of this place, pray?"

"No, sir!" cried several voices; "but Bob must go."

"And I say he shall not!" cried the overseer in return. "I see this is just a riot got up among you."

"Very well, then, *I* shall go," answered Dick, throwing down his spade.

“ And I ! And I ! ” cried several voices.

Samuel here stepped forward to speak a word in favour of the boy, but Dick pushed him back.

“ Don’t speak a word,” he said ; “ you have nothing to say here. Sir,” he continued, addressing the overseer, “ would you like to eat a dead mouse ? Had Bob done what he did to *myself*, I should merely have given him a box on the ear, and done with him ; but he did it to ‘ Coffee-pot,’ and—”

“ Hip, hip, hurrah ! ” cried the band simultaneously, and in a moment Samuel was lifted up off the ground and placed upon the shoulders of two of them.

“ Ay, sir, what d’ye say to that ? ” said Dick, pointing to Samuel, who in vain struggled to get down.

The overseer could not help laughing heartily.

“ All right, lads,” he said ; “ it’s of no use fighting against such a king as yours ! ”

And off he walked with his nephew.

When they were outside the gate, he said, “ Bob, I see you have offended the king of the place. I never knew till now there was such power in ‘ Coffee-pot Sam.’ ”

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN A LONDON COURT.

WE crossed a few streets and reached a narrow lane, that led into a close dirty court. Abel walked ahead, of course. He seemed quite proud of his leadership.

By *we*, I mean my friend Mr. Scott and myself. Mr. Scott is a clerk in a bank. He is a tall powerful-looking man of thirty, with a certain dignity in his appearance, which commands respect as much as his kind, benevolent countenance inspires confidence. Being possessed of a powerful voice, and having the knack of expressing himself in an easy popular way, he commenced open-air services in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell upwards of a year ago. His preaching has been attended with much success. On the Sunday of which I am now speaking, I found myself among his hearers. I went there, not only to witness the work he was carrying on, but

also to hear him myself; for I knew that a half hour spent under his preaching was, to an attentive listener, a step onward in the way of salvation. Not that Mr. Scott told his hearers much that was new. I saw many passers-by stop a few minutes and then walk off again, with an expression that seemed to say, "Ah! the old story over again." But I also saw many who stood as though spell-bound by some mysterious power. They seemed riveted to the spot, and apparently forgot all about their business, so absorbed were they in the subject which the preacher, in his simple eloquence, put so forcibly before their minds. The fact is, "new" and "old" are words of very relative meaning. They denote attributes no object possesses by itself; they are rather imported into it by those who look at it. That which makes a thing new or old to you, is not in the thing, but in yourself. So that what was old to you yesterday may become quite new to-day. For instance, you have known for years that there is a certain remedy for a certain complaint, and whenever you see it advertised in the papers you at once dismiss it from your mind, because you know that you can obtain nothing from it in the way of information. But suppose that the symptoms of the disease begin to manifest themselves in your system, the advertisement soon acquires freshness and interest to you. The old importunate beggar suddenly becomes a new

friend, and you find yourself performing a deed which hitherto you deemed yourself incapable of: you attentively read that "hackneyed" advertisement, and even commit to memory the particulars which it gives. Now, in the very same way, many a one who for years and years had known the Saviour, but did not care about Him, upon falling in with Mr. Scott's preaching, listened with great attention to the proclamation of the old truth. And it was not because the preacher put something new into it, for no preacher, however learned or eloquent, can do that; but because the Holy Spirit put something new into the hearer's heart, something in the shape of an awakened conscience, of a feeling of uneasiness and anxiety concerning the state of his soul; in a word, a discovery of an inward malady, which no one can cure except that Physician whose medicine stands proof even against death.

The service over, a young man of about twenty-five advanced to Mr. Scott. He evidently belonged to the artisan class. His shabby dress seemed to indicate that he was connected with a family which had very little to do with the needle and the brush. His face, however, was pleasant to look at, and you could not help believing that its owner was a true and honest fellow.

"Would you like to go and visit a poor invalid with me?" said Mr. Scott.

"Oh, yes," I replied.

"Very well, Abel," he said, addressing the young man; "we'll go."

"Who is that young man?" I inquired, while Abel stepped on a few paces before us.

"He is one of my most regular hearers," said Mr. Scott. "He came to my preaching some six or eight weeks ago, and has attended steadily ever since. I was much pleased with the fellow's frank, good-looking face, which, like a mirror, gave back the expression my words must have called forth upon my own face. It greatly assisted me in my preaching, for nothing inspires a speaker more than the knowledge that his words are producing an impression on the hearts of his hearers. It may be a weakness in me, but I must confess that my liveliness greatly depends upon the effect which I witness upon the faces of the people. If neither smile nor frown, neither sign of consent nor of disapproval, be noticeable, and the people stare at me like so many wax figures, or look about them with an air of listless indifference, it is hard work for me to go on preaching, however precious the truth may be I am expounding. My spirit sinks with every sentence, as if from each of those inexpressive faces a cold chilly blast came upon my heart, blowing out the flame that warmed my soul when I began, and sometimes actually freezing me. But Abel's face has often made the light flare up

again. From a short conversation I had with him one day I learnt that his parents are old and unable to support themselves, and are entirely dependent upon him and his sister. He has never learnt any trade, and earns a little money by carrying parcels and running errands. He is generally to be seen loitering about the railway stations, trying to pick up a job from the passengers. He said the things he heard me preach about were quite new to him; that he liked them very much, and wished they were also preached in the place where he lives, as he expected much that was bad might be done away with in consequence. This morning he requested me to visit a sick man, a neighbour of his, whom he had told about my preaching, and who had expressed a strong desire to see me. I felt that I must go with him at once, the more so as I was anxious to know a little more about his family and way of living."

Mr. Scott had just done saying this when we reached the court in which Abel lived. It was like most of its kind, dark, dirty, and almost suffocatingly close. It contained about ten or twelve four-storied dilapidated houses, and teemed with little children, who ran about at play. Men and women were standing in the doorways, the men smoking, and the women, some of whom were very guadily dressed and others in rags, were picking fish or peeling oranges, and chatting with their neighbours. Some kept up conversations

with others from the windows of the first and second stories. The whole made upon my tympanum the impression of an enormous bee-hive, the buzz of which was uninterrupted.

Abel proceeded to the doorway of one of the houses, where an elderly woman was standing with a fat healthy-looking baby in her arms. There was a sudden pause in the buzz, as the appearance of two gentlemen evidently attracted great notice.

"I say, Lizzy," cried a voice from a window, "it's for the Jew. He must die a Christian, and no help for him."

"Moses and Aaron!" was the answer.

A burst of uproarious laughter made the court resound. Abel pushed us rather hurriedly into the house.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Mr. Scott, who found himself in the dark passage sooner than its odour would have made him wish.

"Please step in, sir," answered Abel, opening the door of the front room. "I will tell you."

The room in which we found ourselves presented such a spectacle of confusion as I never saw before. Elegance and sordidness were here wrestling for the supremacy. There was a round walnut table and a stuffed easy chair, which might have figured in any gentleman's drawing-room. But the table was covered with a dirty rag, and in the easy chair sat a

grey-headed man, of whose dress there was not one piece that was not torn. A fine bird's cage hung on the wall, and near to it a decayed Dutch clock, without hands, and completely covered with dust. A guitar of Italian make stood in a corner, surrounded with pots and pans, both dirty and broken. The elderly woman who followed us into the room had on an old torn cotton gown, but a splendid silk dress and a gorgeously coloured shawl were noticeable, suspended on a nail close by the fire-place. The old grey-headed man had something venerable in his appearance, in spite of his ragged coat. It was easy to see that the owner of that good-natured face was Abel's father.

"Please, sir," said Abel to Mr. Scott, "the sick man lives up-stairs on the second floor. I believe he is a Jew; at least, he is believed to be one by every body in the court. The people don't like him, but I think he is a good fellow."

"No, he is not," said the old woman; "he is a fool, sir, if not worse."

"Now, mother, be quiet," said Abel; "you cannot prove a single thing against Benjamins."

"Can't I?" answered the woman contemptuously. "Does he not call the police into the court for every trifle? He is a low spy. He is paid for it, depend upon it."

"Ah well, Sarah, you had better not say that,"

said the old man. "You're wrong in this matter, I suspect. At any rate, allow the gentlemen to see poor Benjamins, as they want to speak a word to him."

"Well, that's all right," replied the woman, lowering her voice to a tone of compassion. "God forbid that I should prevent a man's good, especially when dying, as perhaps is the case with Benjamins. We are all of us poor sinners, and in need of God's mercy."

"Do you believe that?" asked Mr. Scott, agreeably surprised by this confession of the woman.

"Of course I do, sir," answered she. "I always say, that but for God's mercy I should be lying at the bottom of hell. Even the best of us deserve nothing less than that."

"Then have you a well-founded hope that you will not be found lying there one day?" asked Mr. Scott, in a grave tone.

"I hope I have, sir. I pray every day, 'Lord have mercy upon me.'"

"Of course you do," quoth the old man, with a sour smile.

His wife cast a grim look at him.

"I always say, sir," continued she, "a man who has no religion is worse than a brute."

She then told us that from her childhood she had been used to attend public worship regularly, but that of late she had been prevented by infirmity and by many engagements at home.

"I see you have a baby to care for," said Mr. Scott, taking the child's hand. "Is it your daughter's?"

"Yes, sir."

"Does she live with you?"

"She does, sir."

"So her husband is dead?"

"He is not, sir. He is a sailor, and is from home just now."

"Ah, Sarah, you know better," muttered the old man, sufficiently loud to be heard.

"I think we will just go and see the sick man," said Mr. Scott, who did not feel much pleasure in carrying on this conversation. "Abel, go ahead, if you please, and show us the room where the sick man is."

Some forty wooden steps, up which we had to grope our way in Egyptian darkness, took us to the back room of the second story. We found ourselves in a tolerably large apartment, indifferently furnished, but clean and tidy. There was a bed opposite the windows, upon which a sick man was lying, and another bed opposite the fire-place, which was unoccupied. An old woman who was sitting at the table near the window, dropped a lowly curtsy and left the place when we entered. Abel, after having introduced us to the sick man and given us seats, followed her example, and walked down-stairs. The invalid appeared to be about thirty. There could

be no doubt that he was a Jew, or at any rate of Jewish extraction, for his black hair and beard, his aquiline nose, and his strongly-protruding jaw-bones stamped his face of that peculiar type which so certainly distinguishes the children of Abraham from all other nations. After a few words about his illness, which, though painful and chronic, yet proved not to be of a very serious nature, he expressed his gratitude for the visit with which we had favoured him.

“Abel told me of your preaching,” he said to Mr. Scott, “and I often said I wish I could speak to that gentleman; but I never could expect, sir, that you would trouble yourself to come all the way to see me. It is too much, indeed.”

“And what made you wish to speak to me?” asked Mr. Scott.

“Why, sir,” answered he, with a smile, “there is a bit of a controversy between my friend Abel and myself about religion. I am an Israelite, as perhaps you may be aware. Now, I have been thinking much about religious matters of late, as I have been struck by the fact that Christians and Jews can never agree, though Christians believe and read our Bible.”

“So you read your Bible?” asked Mr. Scott.

“Certainly I do,” answered he, producing an Old Testament, with the Hebrew and English text in parallel columns, from underneath his pillow. “I am

not a very great Hebrew scholar, but with the aid of the translation I can make it out pretty well. Now, I have read Moses and the Prophets over and over again, and I have found that it was wrong in our rabbis to impose upon us a great many things of which not a word is to be found in the law of God. I often quarrelled with them about this, which ended in my leaving the synagogue, lest I should be turned out. They follow absurd traditions for which there is no Divine authority whatever; and as I want to serve God, and not man, I threw all those human inventions overboard. But, on the other hand, I found that the Christian religion is not true either. I have often had conversations about it with Abel's mother, who would sometimes say to me that I would go to hell if I did not turn a Christian. But I found that her religion does away with the law of God altogether. For God in the law most decidedly declares that it is our duty to do His commandments, and that those who do them shall live, and have a great reward. But Mrs. Harris—that's the name of Abel's mother—always speaks of God's mercy, and that we are great sinners, and can only be saved by grace. But under the cover of these words she commits the greatest iniquities, and lives as if there were no God nor eternity at all. Her daughter leads a life of sin. She is out at present with the orange-basket, as usual, but I am certain she will come home to-night with some sailor whom

she has entrapped in her snares, and whom she will keep in her power till she has robbed him of everything. Her mother encourages her in her infamous way of living, and, in fact, the whole family live upon the earnings of that unhappy girl. If you saw into their back-parlour you would find it stuffed with articles which they have bought with the wages of iniquity, or have got as presents from their wretched victims. This state of things is a real eye-sore to the old man, who is good and honest ; but he is weak, and must submit. As for Abel, he was always disgusted with it, and constantly quarrelled with his mother and sister. From the day he first heard you preach, however, he found he could not with a good conscience continue a member of a family which lived in such immorality, and, as we had often conversed about the matter, he resolved to take up his abode with me. That is his bed there. We live together like brothers, having everything in common, as we are both of us poor. I am in the service of Mr. Solomon Rahab, who deals in old clothes, and whatever I bring home in the way of wages I put into that box on the mantelpiece, and so does Abel, and we take from it what we are in need of. For Abel is an out-and-out honest fellow, and I could trust him with anything. Now, the fact that your preaching caused him to break with his mother's household, and, like Moses, to prefer the desert with a good conscience to his mother's Egyptian flesh-pots,

made me think that your Christianity at any rate must be something better than Mrs. Harris's. Abel also told me that you always spoke highly of the commandments of God, and that you had said that Christ had not come to do away with the law, but to fulfil it. But how that could be he could not tell. Abel is a good fellow, but dreadfully ignorant. He can neither read nor write. I have just begun to teach him a little reading, but he is not a very quick scholar. His heart is better than his head. So, upon finding that he could not give me an explanation, I often expressed the wish that I could have a conversation with the preacher himself. I am very thankful, sir, for the kindness with which you have gratified my desire."

"I shall be happy to answer any question you wish to put to me, as far as it is in my power," replied Mr. Scott. "If I am right, your chief difficulty is as to the relation in which God's law stands to His mercy. Now, as to God's commandments, we both agree that they are holy and good, and that it is our duty to keep them. But I hope you will also agree with me when I say that there is not one among the children of Adam who perfectly keeps God's commandments, and that we are all transgressors."

"I admit that," answered Benjamins; "but that's exactly what perplexes me. When Mrs. Harris said that we are all sinners, I could not help owning that

she spoke the truth, neither could I help admitting her conclusion that we consequently can only live and be saved by the mercy of God. But then, I thought, if we are to live through grace, what is the use of the law ?”

“Why, of course,” said I, thinking that I saw clearly through the whole matter, “the law is necessary to regulate our life, and to keep us in the right way. But then, *if* we should unfortunately trespass against one of the commandments, grace steps in to make up for it. Else there would be no hope for us. Don’t you see ?”

“I beg your pardon,” replied the Jew. “I cannot see how your theory solves my difficulty. Will grace make up for the transgression of only *one* commandment ?”

“More, of course.”

“Then of two.”

“Of more.”

“Suppose there are one hundred commandments which it is our duty to obey, and suppose I can only obey a portion of them, can you tell me the minimum which I *must* perform, to have a claim upon grace ? Where is the line at which grace begins ? Suppose, after having done my utmost all my life long, I find at the end that my righteousness amounts only to thirty per cent., may I rest assured that grace will make up for the remaining seventy ?”

"There is no such line drawn," said I, a little put out by this arithmetical way of treating morals.

"So it does not matter how much righteousness we bring in?" he asked, in a tone of disappointment. "We may have transgressed one commandment, or fifty, or ninety-nine, or even the whole of them: it is all the same? In the measure in which our righteousness shrinks back, grace steps forward. Is that the true religion? Then Mrs. Harris is right, and there is no harm in her immoral conduct. Mercy will be sure to put it all right for her. But then, permit me to ask again: what is the use of the Divine commandments, if *that* is God's way?"

I looked at Mr. Scott, who, with a smile on his face, listened to our discussion in silence.

"Now, Mr. Scott, what do *you* say?" I asked.

"Why, Mr. Benjamins," said Mr. Scott, "I want you to answer your questions yourself. You are putting a serious difficulty before our mind. On one side there is the law of God, holy and good. On the other side there is the fact that we all transgress that law, and consequently deserve punishment. The question here rises: how are we to escape that punishment? The theory of God's mercy stepping in to make up for the deficit was proposed. But you have rejected that theory, on the ground of its making the law useless. Now, do you know any other theory that will satisfy an alarmed conscience? As for *me*,

if a man has violated a law, *I* cannot see how he can escape the penalty unless mercy interpose. But perhaps *you* know another way ?”

“ I will by no means deny that mercy is required,” replied the invalid. “ On the contrary, both the Law and the Prophets declare, ‘ If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.’ But what perplexes my mind is the impossibility of finding out the *condition* upon which only mercy can be granted.”

“ If we repent and confess our sins, the Lord will forgive us,” observed I.

“ Yes, so our Bible tells us. When David said to Nathan, ‘ I have sinned against the Lord,’ the prophet answered immediately, ‘ The Lord also hath put away thy sin : ‘thou shalt not die.’ But I cannot see how repentance can be a solid ground for the granting of mercy, unless that repentance be perfect and complete in every respect. But here again the question arises : where is the man who always manifests a perfect repentance ? David may have shown such complete repentance in the case which I have just referred to. But was he *always* such a perfect penitent ? *If* he was, he must have been a man of a different stamp from myself. *I* feel that I cannot always show such repentance as I suppose a holy and perfect God must require. I can understand how,

through the mercy of God, repentance may make up for the transgression of the law in one or two cases ; but how it can be a permanent ground for acquittal, I cannot make out."

"You are quite right," said Mr. Scott. "Mercy can never be the rule ; it can only be the exception. Any state, kingdom, or society would be sure to break down if mercy and not justice were the foundation of its organisation. A king who in all cases allowed repentance to make up for the transgression of his law, would soon lose all his authority, because he would reduce his law to a mere nonentity, and himself to an object of derision. But I cannot see how God could allow repentance to make up for transgression even in one single case. I can understand how an earthly king can allow such a thing, because every earthly king is a trespasser himself, and not only a trespasser against the law of God, but against his own law. But God is a perfectly just king, and perfect justice excludes every idea of connivance at the transgression of the law. If such a connivance is once allowed, justice is violated, and it would make no alteration in the case, whether that connivance were repented of or not."

"Just so," exclaimed the Jew. "That's exactly what I always perceived. Justice and mercy may go together in man, because in man both justice and mercy are imperfect. But how in God mercy can be

compatible with justice is a mystery to me. The one requires punishment, and the other requires acquittal, and both being perfect, the one cannot allow itself to be made imperfect by giving up a part of its claim in favour of the other."

"Still, it appears to me," said Mr. Scott, "that there is a way in which both may obtain their respective claims, and yet remain perfectly free from violation. Suppose a man is by the law sentenced to imprisonment till his debt is paid, and suppose the king, desiring to deliver him from that sentence, pays his debt. Will not both justice and mercy be satisfied in that case? We call such a proceeding *substitution*. Have you ever thought of that?"

"I have," replied the Jew. "You know our law is full of it. The whole system of sacrifices is based upon that principle. But I never could see how it could solve the difficulty we are speaking of at present. Can perfect justice permit the transgression of God's holy law to be made up for by the killing of an innocent unconscious animal in place of the transgressor?"

"I think not," replied Mr. Scott; "but suppose God himself came down on earth to be put to death instead of the guilty creatures whom He desired to save. Could justice object to such a solution of the difficulty?"

"God be put to death!" exclaimed the Jew, with an expression of utter amazement. He cast a grave

inquisitive look at Mr. Scott, as if to ascertain whether he was in earnest.

“Of course it could only be possible if God became man,” continued Mr. Scott. “I dare say you have often noticed, when reading Moses and the Prophets, that they point at that great unfathomable mystery which was one day to be realised, viz., the incarnation of God in the person of Israel’s Messiah, David’s great son.”

The conversation now assumed the form of a sharp argument. The idea of such a thing as an incarnation of Jehovah appeared not only to be new to Benjamins’ mind, but he even rejected it with signs of horror. He kept, however, within the boundaries of a regular and polite discussion, and allowed Mr. Scott full scope to state the doctrine of the Gospel on this fundamental point, and to show its congruity with the teaching of Moses and the Prophets. This was in so far blessed with success as it contributed much towards clearing away many erroneous opinions which Benjamins had picked up in his childhood about the “abominable idolatry of the Christians,” and towards exciting his desire to become acquainted with the contents of the New Testament, of which I gave him a copy.

Before we left, Mr. Scott promised to repeat his visit, and Benjamins requested us, if possible, to do something for Abel.

“He is a good, honest, and diligent fellow,” said he; “but the pity is, he has no regular employment, and this makes his mind unsettled. He wishes to marry a decent girl who lives here in the court, but I have hitherto been able to keep him from that, as I am sure it would only make another poor starving family. Besides, I wish he could return to his parents; but that cannot be, so long as his sister Dora is in the house. Dora is not what is called a ‘bad woman.’ She is young, and exceedingly light-minded; but if she were under good control, I believe she would not prove refractory. I have often spoken to her about her present conduct, and pointed her to the frightful consequences which must one day follow it in this life and in the life to come. Her eyes often fill with tears, and sometimes she sighs, ‘I wish I were out of this house!’ She fears, however, lest her parents should starve if she were to leave them. Besides, she does not know where to go, as she has learnt nothing except rambling about with the orange basket, and she has a baby to take care of, which she is much attached to. Her mother, too, lying, hypocritical, and flaunting as she is, has yet a few features in her character which give me ground to hope that she is not an irrecoverably wicked woman. I believe if Abel could be placed in such a position as to be able to support his parents, matters would greatly improve in that house, and I dare say in the whole of

this court. For this family exercises a bad influence upon the inhabitants, owing to the sailors and soldiers, and loose lads whom the girl brings into the court."

Having safely groped our way down again, we were met by Abel, who asked us if we would mind visiting another invalid in the court. As we had still some time to spare, we followed him to a house on the opposite side, the ground-floor of which appeared to be a rag-store. The door was strongly barred inside, for locks were turned and chains unfastened before we could enter. Abel did not go in with us, but a tall stout man, who opened the door, guided us to the place we sought. We had to wind our way through heaps of articles of every possible description lying scattered about in strange confusion. At one glance I noticed watches, and spoons, and musical instruments, sailors' clothes and military uniforms, swords and rifles, compasses and chronometers, and—Bibles. The odious smell which pervaded the place was almost insupportable. We were glad to reach the stairs, which led us up to the back room of the first floor.

"Get out of the way," snarled our guide to two little children who, in their innocent play, blocked up the landing-place. The poor things pressed themselves to the wall in a fright. Our guide then ushered us into the back room, while he himself turned into the front one. We afterwards learnt

that he was the landlord of the house, and the owner of the rag-store. The family whom we were going to visit were his tenants.

The room in which we now found ourselves presented an aspect of poverty, combined however, with cleanliness and order. It scarcely contained any furniture, save a little table, a couple of wooden chairs, and a wooden bench. At the window sat a good-looking girl, about twenty, engaged in sewing. Two little boys, apparently about five or six, were rolling a ball across the floor. In a bed lay a sick woman of between forty and fifty. Her flushed face indicated that she was in a fever. Her pillow and blanket seemed quite new, and contrasted strangely with the poor aspect of the room. On a little stool before her bed were a few oranges, a pot with jelly, a paper bag apparently containing sugar, and a small decanter filled with a yellowish liquor, which looked like sherry or brandy. Poor as the place was, it contained nothing indicative of neglect. The floor was clean, and so was the furniture, and the dresses of the girl and the boys, though showing the effects of frequent use and mending, were yet without rents and stains.

"Hush! be quiet now," said the girl to the boys when we entered. She dropped a curtsey, and placing two chairs near the bed, invited us to be seated.

We soon got into conversation with the invalid,

who proved an intelligent woman. She was a widow, who had lost her husband four years ago. The family had lived in Cheltenham, where her husband had been employed at the baths, and had been able to maintain his wife and children in pretty comfortable circumstances. At his death, being deprived of every means of subsistence, she had removed to London by the advice of their present landlord, Mr. Groves, who was a cousin of her late husband's, and an old bachelor. He had given her ten shillings a-week and the use of the room, for which she had to clean his room and cook his meals. Mary, her eldest daughter, also received from him twelve shillings a-week for assisting him in the rag-store. She had thus been able to keep herself and her five children in comparative comfort. But soon some disagreement had arisen between Mr. Groves and herself, owing to which Mary had withdrawn from the store. She was consequently thrown wholly upon her own ten shillings for support, to which, however, Mary added a few shillings, which she earned by sewing for the people in the court.

While she was telling this story, the merry noise of the two little girls playing on the landing-place was heard now and again.

"Mary, go and tell the girls not to make such a noise," she said to her daughter; "give them this orange, and let the boys have the other one."

"No, no, that shan't be," said Mary, proceeding to the door; "Mrs. Harris would scold me if she heard of it. She said decidedly that the oranges were all for you; she left a bag with dates for the children."

"Does Mrs. Harris visit you occasionally?" asked I.

"Very often, sir, and she always brings something in the shape of refreshment. She is a very kind-hearted person. Whatever may be said of her, there can be no doubt that she is the most compassionate person in the court. She cannot bear to see people in distress. She would give her last penny to help them. The other day, when she noticed the condition of my bed, she sent me her own pillow and blanket."

"How very strange!" said I, casting a look at Mr. Scott.

"I am afraid," replied Mr. Scott, "the poor woman fearfully misinterprets the text that 'Charity shall cover a multitude of sins.'"

"Why, if that is a text of the Bible," said the woman; "she will have a large cover for her sins, indeed."

"I am afraid that cover will not avail her much in the great day," said Mr. Scott; "since, in my opinion, the text means nothing else than this, that a person who is animated by the spirit of love, will not bring his neighbour's sins to light, but cover them

up with the cloak of charity. The Gospel teaches me that, with reference to our *own* sins, there is but one covering given that will stand the eternal judgment, viz., the atoning blood of Christ. I hope, my good woman, you are not ignorant of that great truth."

From the conversation that now ensued it appeared that Mrs. Jeffreys—that was the woman's name—knew very little of the way of salvation. Though she was the daughter of respectable parents belonging to the trading class, her religious training had been very defective, and her family life, though a pattern of order and decency, had, at the same time, been a very ignorant one as to things spiritual. She appeared remarkably well educated for a woman in her position, in so far as regarded the forms and fashions of social life; she was not unskilled in female handiwork, and could read and write perfectly well, while the way in which she expressed herself showed that the immense quantity of novels she had devoured from her youth upwards, had at least had a purifying influence upon her language and style.

"I am ashamed to confess that I have hitherto cared very little about religion," she said; "and perhaps I should not care about it even now, had not Abel spoken to me of your preaching, and told us you had said that we were lost for ever if we did not repent and turn to God. Now I felt that this was a grave saying, which set me thinking seriously,

especially as the Jew Benjamins at the same time put some questions and made some observations which caused me to think very anxiously. For he said that God was a just and holy God, who was one day to call us to account for all our words and deeds, and he showed that we were not living up to His commandments."

"Certainly you are not," I said; "I noticed it directly on entering your room, for I saw your daughter engaged in sewing on the Lord's Day."

"Why, that's exactly one of the things which the Jew also spoke about. 'Look here,' he said, 'you, as a Christian woman, believe that the first day of the week is the Sabbath instituted by God, and yet you allow yourself to desecrate it by working just the same as on any other day. How will you answer to God for that?' he asked. Now I could not say much to that; but, on the other hand, I answered that I hoped our Father in heaven would show us mercy, taking into account our position, as we must mend our own clothes and those of the children on Sunday, since we must sew for other people during the week. But he shook his head, and said, 'Mercy, mercy! you are just talking like Mrs. Harris. You Christian people seem to think that our good Lord will allow you to come before Him with divers weights as you use them in your shops, and that if you make up for Him the full weight by your

works, you may throw as much of mercy into the scale as will put the balance right.' But, sir, what are we to do? If the Lord has no mercy upon us, we are lost, all of us, ain't we?"

"Certainly," replied I; "every morsel of bread which we eat is a gift of God, which we have not deserved. But since God is so merciful towards us, we ought to serve Him all the more faithfully, and avoid everything that gives Him cause of discontent."

"Yes, so we should," answered Mrs. Jeffreys, "but circumstances are so trying in this world, sir, that we are often compelled to do what we feel we ought not."

"But if we do good only when it is easy, we are bad Christians," said I. "True religion consists in suffering and making sacrifices, rather than acting against our consciences."

"That's exactly like the Jew again, isn't it, Mary?" said the invalid, turning her head towards her daughter.

"Just like him," answered Mary; "I believe he is a better Christian than we are, though he is a Jew."

"Why, sir," continued the mother, "I will tell you what the matter is. Mary, as I told you, was engaged by my cousin, Mr. Groves, for the rag-store, but it was soon evident that he wanted her more especially to attract the sailors and soldiers to his shop. Her

position became very dangerous, but I did not know what to do, as our livelihood depended chiefly upon her earnings, and Mrs. Harris said I should not be too particular about what young people were about, since we ourselves had once been young and merry. Still, Mary was quite wretched and miserable; but she submitted, poor thing, as she knew that there was no help for it. But one day Mr. Benjamins came up and spoke to me; nay, he remonstrated with me, and said that I *must* break it off at once, if I did not want to get God's wrath poured out upon my head, and that it was better even to starve with a good conscience, than to sin and to grow rich by it. And he came again and again, and left us no rest, till we yielded, and Mary gave up her situation, which she was but too happy to do. He also spoke to Mr. Groves, and showed him that the way in which he conducted his trade was unjust and ruinous to the young people; but Mr. Groves got angry and turned him out of the house, and from that time Benjamins has not been allowed to step over our threshold. Unfortunately, a few days after that occurrence the police came into the shop seeking after some stolen property which my cousin had bought—not knowing, however, that it was stolen. The whole store was carefully searched in consequence, and my cousin has had many a visit of the police since. He believes that Benjamins played him that trick for vengeance, and so does

the whole court. The people are exasperated against the Jew, though I am assured he is as innocent as a new-born baby."

"Your cousin seems to be a hard man," said Mr. Scott.

"Why, sir, he is not so bad as many take him for. His besetting sin is greed. He must be a wealthy man from all I can gather, but he lives like a poor beggar. On the other hand he is not altogether void of humanity, else he would have turned us out as well as Benjamins. He even said to me the other day, 'Why, Mrs. Jeffreys, I believe that after all you were right in taking Mary away from the store. She is better where she is now.' 'Thank you, Mr. Groves,' said I, 'but it is a hard thing for us to have lost her earnings, and I wish you would think of raising my allowance instead.' 'Oh no,' said he, 'I cannot think of that, but I will remember Mary in my will.'"

"What is his age?" asked I.

"Between sixty and seventy, and he is not very strong. Still, he may live many a year yet; cracked china lasts longest, the proverb says."

"And who has taken Mary's place in the shop?"

"Nobody. He has an old servant, who lives in the room over this, a cripple, who lost his leg in India, and has a small pension. I am afraid, however, that the poor fellow has spent his last day in the shop, for he fell sick a week ago, and the doctor has given up all

hope. This puts my cousin out very much, as he must now do all the work alone, and it will knock him up altogether, unless he engages an assistant. But he will not easily come to do that, as he trusts nobody, and suspects every one who enters his shop."

"Ah, he couldn't do better than take Abel," quoth Mary; "but he is too stingy to be willing to pay his wages. He could not have a more honest servant than him."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Jeffreys.

"Did you ever suggest the thing to Mr. Groves?" asked Mr. Scott.

"I did, sir, but he would not listen to it. He thinks it is an invention of Mary's to get married to Abel."

"Oh, mother!" cried Mary, "you shouldn't tell such things. It's all nonsense."

"Why, child, nonsense or no, it is a fact that he thinks so; and perhaps he is not so far from the mark as you would make us believe he is."

Mary's face turned crimson all over. She left the room to look after the children on the landing.

"She is such a good girl," said Mrs. Jeffreys, while her eyes brightened up with enthusiasm. "But for her, sir, we should have been in the workhouse long since. She works day and night for us, and at the same time teaches the children. Will you believe, sir, that that little boy, the oldest of the two, who is

only seven, can already read a page? Johnny, take your book, and read a few lines to the gentleman."

Johnny disappeared behind a curtain which concealed a corner of the room, where, as I understood, the children's beds were placed. He soon re-appeared with a New Testament, similar to those of which I had noticed a dozen on a shelf in the rag-store.

"Come," said his mother, kindly beckoning to him. He overcame his bashfulness, and taking his stand by the bed, turned up a page, and read with considerable fluency a few verses of the Gospel of St. John.

"Ah, but you can read much better," said his mother proudly, stroking his hair; "only he is rather shy, sir. He never read anything to anybody else but ourselves. Now Johnny, take this orange, you have done very well, and give the half of it to your brother."

"No, I'd rather not," said Johnny, shaking his head in a determined way. "It isn't for us; we've got our dates."

"Ay, sir, they are just like their sister," said Mrs. Jeffreys. "It is wonderful how she manages to keep them in order. And they are so fond of her! You have no conception of it."

"There is a great power in love," said Mr. Scott, in a voice indicative of deep emotion. "You see, Mrs. Jeffreys, your children obey your daughter in everything because they love her. This is the key to

the riddle which perplexes Mr. Benjamins and so many others. If we love God truly, we shall with pleasure keep His commandments. Love, Scripture says, is the fulfilling of the law. The great question only is: how to come to such a state of mind that we can love God with all our heart and with all our strength."

"It would be a grand thing, said Mary, who had re-entered the room; "wouldn't it, mother?"

"I think I could love God with all my heart, child," replied Mrs. Jeffreys; "but you know there are so many distractions and trials in this life."

"Please tell me *why* you think you could love God?" asked Mr. Scott.

"Why, sir, because He is our Creator and Benefactor. He sends us His blessings every day, doesn't He?"

"Yes; and so He has been doing all your life long, from the moment you were born up to the present day. And yet, as I may gather from what you told me about your own history, you have cared very little about Him, and lived as if He did not exist."

"True," said she, with a scarcely audible voice.

"I think something more than merely temporal blessings is required to make us truly love God," observed I. "It is a sad fact, but a fact it is, that the longer we enjoy God's perishable benefits, the more we get into the habit of forgetting our benefactor,

unless a desire for better than earthly gifts drive us towards Him."

"We shall never come to love God with all our heart," said Mr. Scott, "until we come to look upon Him as our Saviour from everlasting perdition. I remember having once spent an evening with a friend of mine, a wealthy merchant, at his place in Herts. The subject of our conversation was what we are speaking about just now. 'Nothing is able to enkindle such cordial love as salvation,' said my friend. 'I saw that truth confirmed the other day in the conduct of my gardener. Though he earned high wages and I gave him many a present, yet he always continued a selfish, cold-hearted fellow. He did just his duty, but nothing more, and never showed me any sign of personal attachment. But one day I happened to be walking alongside the pond, when he had taken a boat to recover a ball which his little boy while playing had thrown into it. Unfortunately he overbalanced himself, and fell into the middle of the pond, where it is very deep. Of course, I flung off my coat, jumped in, and, though with considerable difficulty, succeeded in bringing him safe ashore. From that day he is quite a changed man to me. He is the best, the most willing and faithful, of all my servants. He does not know what to do to please me, and if he can only guess some desire which I cherish, he is sure to have it fulfilled long before I think of telling him of

it. Formerly he often grumbled when I required him to do anything beyond the usual course of labour; but I do not believe that I could now bid him do anything, however out of the way, which it would not be a pleasure for him to do.' I have often since then thought of that story of my friend. It so clearly illustrates the effect of God's saving love in Christ upon our hearts. He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to suffer and to die for us on the cross. He thus rescued us from the everlasting misery which we had brought upon ourselves through our sins. If we believe that with our heart, we cannot but love Him with all the affections of our soul. We become changed men. We begin to adore and to rejoice in Him, because we were lost and He saved us even at the cost of His blood."

"That's just what Abel said to us the other day, do you remember, mother?" said Mary. "'If Christ had not suffered and died on the cross,' he said, 'we should be hanging there now and for ever.'"

"Yes, he said so, child; but you recollect what Benjamins said. 'That could not be,' said he, 'for it would be a gross injustice to allow an innocent man to be hung instead of the guilty one.' And Abel could not answer him there. Oh, he is sharp, the Jew is."

"But I think I can solve that difficulty," said Mr. Scott. "If Jesus were only a common man like us,

Mr. Benjamins would be right; but Jesus is God Himself, the Creator of all of us, the eternal Lawgiver and Judge, and He became man for the express purpose of bearing the sentence of His own law in our stead. He did not lay that sentence upon another man, but He took it upon Himself. Now, had He not a right to do so? Was there any injustice in that? Was it not all boundless love and mercy?"

Mrs. Jeffreys appeared quite struck with that explanation. "Oh, I see, I see it now!" she said, clasping her hands in wonder and delight. Mr. Scott then added a few observations, which he corroborated by reading a portion of the fifth chapter of the Romans.

"Sir," whispered Mary to Mr. Scott, as we went out, "I *am* so glad you spoke to my mother. I hope you will come back soon; we are so ignorant, you know."

About twelve months after my visit to the court, I was sitting one day on the platform of the Crystal Palace line, and who should sit opposite to me but Mr. Benjamins. I scarcely recognised him, so different was he from the pale-faced invalid I had seen in the court. He looked quite a gentleman, and was buoyant with health.

"And how are matters going on in the court?" I inquired.

“ Oh, we left it three months ago,” he answered.
“ Didn’t Mr. Scott tell you ? ”

“ I haven’t seen Mr. Scott since I was with him in the court that Sunday.”

“ Well, then, I must tell you what has happened. Great changes have taken place since you saw us. First, Mr. Groves died, and, picture to yourself the amazement of the court people when it was known that he had bequeathed all his property to Mary. She married Abel, and the rag-store was transplanted to Shoreditch. Abel insisted upon my becoming his partner, as I am well acquainted with the old clothes trade, and we there carry on a thriving business under the firm of Harris and Co. Of course, Mrs. Jeffreys and the children live with them.”

“ And Abel’s parents, what has become of them ? ”
asked I.

“ They live in the country, where Abel supports them. His sister Dora married a sailor, and emigrated with him to Australia.”

“ And you yourself,” asked I, “ what are you—a Jew or a Christian ? ”

But here the train came up, and I had to get in. While I was standing ready to enter he whispered into my ear,—

“ I hope to meet you when we see Him whom we have pierced.”

THE GERMAN FAMILY IN LONDON.

ONE September day there was an open-air missionary meeting in the neighbourhood of Barmen in the lovely Wupperthal. The friends of missions in the vicinity had flocked together from all quarters. There was scarcely a village within a circuit of ten miles which did not send its minister with his deacons and the better portion of his church members. Men and women, old and young, rich and poor, crowded together, exhibiting that true and wonderful equality and fraternity, which political communism can at best but caricature, and nothing but Christian communion can realise. On a small platform, under the broad foliage of a gigantic beech tree, some of the leaders of the mission were sitting in committee, directing the proceedings of the day. At a distance, amidst the slender stems of tall firs, between which the September sun cast his cheerful rays, long rows of tables and forms were placed to

to accommodate the numerous guests at dinner-time, a roll, a bit of meat, and a cup of coffee would sustain them for the work of the afternoon.

Several speakers, famous for their eloquence or practical knowledge of mission-work, addressed the assembly. Each speech was closed with a hymn, and in the pauses hymn after hymn was raised by the people themselves, making the forest and the neighbouring hills resound with the sweet melodies of the *deutschen Kirchenlieder*. And when afterwards the people were seated at the tables, and the blessing was asked by the chairman, the speeches and the hymns were continued in uninterrupted succession, every one being desirous of expressing the feelings of his heart on this happy day, and of contributing something towards building up the congregation in their faith, hope, and love. And so it went on from hour to hour, till at last the long shadows of the firs announced the setting of the sun, and gave the signal for departure. In numerous groups, dotting the roads that crossed the hills in all directions, the people returned to their homes, keeping up the enthusiasm of the day by their evening hymns, which echoed through the valleys.

A little group walked up the steep road leading to the village of Kirchheim. It consisted of Hermann Stahl, the farmer, Peter Wermann, the schoolmaster, with their wives and a few neighbours

at school of no other way of salvation than his friend the minister recommended to their parents at church. The people having thus, from time immemorial, been accustomed to meet as children in one and the same school, and as adults in one and the same church, it could not be any matter of wonder that the whole population of Kirchheim looked like one family, of which the minister was the father and the school-master the eldest brother. Kirchheim was one of those happy villages, of which the remote hilly districts of Rhenish Prussia have always possessed a considerable number. The various changes in theological systems have found as little access to them as the shifting caprices of fashion, and consequently the old faith of the Reformers is there maintained intact, as well as the simplicity of patriarchal life. In those villages the pattern of the first Christian church at Jerusalem, the members of which "were of one heart and of one soul, having all things in common," is preserved as far as it is possible in our day. The people go in and out of each other's houses with as much freedom as though they were their own; and no wonder, for they were wont to do so as children, and the time for dropping the good custom has not, in their opinion, come round. They call each other, and each other's wives, by their Christian names, as familiarly as if they were brothers and sisters. They are often seen in summer time sitting in rows of six

or eight on the benches near the front doors of the cottages, cheerfully chatting till the setting sun, or the chiming of the evening bell, calls them to their homes. In winter they spend their evenings in small companies, assembling in the houses by rotation, when many a good book is read, and many an interesting subject discussed. At these gatherings either the minister or the schoolmaster is generally present, and he usually gives such a tone to the conversation as promotes the religious knowledge and edification of the people. Pauperism or destitution is impossible in those places, unless some general calamity, such as a failure of the crops or an inundation, throws the whole of the population into distress. The people know each other too well not to know each other's wants, and they love one another too well not to try to help where help is possible.

Now Hermann Stahl was a member of one of these happy communities. Nor was he an insignificant member. He was an elder of the church, and was held in high esteem on account of his piety and respectable conduct. It would have been difficult to point to a man, in his position in life, who found himself in happier circumstances. His farm, though not very large, was yet sufficient for the support of himself and his family. He had attained the highest honours within the reach of an inhabitant of Kirchheim. He was everywhere received with cordial

houses were open to him, and many into them he knew how to pour the Gospel. No wonder, then, that he was listened with surprise when it was known that Hermann contemplated emigrating to America. Everybody was put about by the news, for Hermann was always thought to be the most prudent man in the village, and never expected to have recourse to such a measure. The pastor, the schoolmaster, and the elders of the church took the highest interest in the matter, for they all desired to miss such a good man from the village and its Christian society. And besides, people thought, if Hermann set the example, it was likely that more would follow, and what would then become of good old Kirchheim? So the first few days after the report had gone forth, Hermann's house was besieged by people inquiring whether it was really true, and trying to dissuade him from such an "absurd plan." In fact, he could scarcely show himself in the village street, without being accosted by friends, some of whom besought him even with tears in their eyes to consider well before it was too late.

Now, the reasons which induced Hermann to think of such a plan as exchanging the dearly beloved "old home" for a new and unknown world, were not so urgent as he thought, but neither were so absurd as his friends and neighbours tried to make him appear. His first and chief reason was

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On this Peter Vormann, the schoolmaster, would remark that it was all very plausible and alluring to read about in brother Dietrich's letter, but that it might turn out very different in reality. He remembered many who, with similar sanguine expectations, had emigrated to America only to die in poverty and destitution. He always repeated those beautiful words of the Psalmist in the 37th Psalm:—"Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It was true that he (Peter) could not show Hermann how his four sons were to be provided with farms ten or fifteen years hence. But it appeared to him that Hermann might safely leave that matter in the hand of the Lord, who ten or fifteen years hence would prove the same faithful, wise, and mighty God and Helper that he had always proved before. If there were some urgent cause which imperatively necessitated his departure; if, for instance, it was shown that from year to year he was going backward in his domestic and monetary affairs, then Peter would be inclined to regard brother Dietrich's letters as so many voices from Heaven calling him from Germany to America, in the same way as Abraham had been called from Ur or Israel out of Egypt, to emigrate to a land which the Lord had destined for them to dwell in. If no such urgent cause existed, it would be reckless imprudence and a

presumptuous anticipation of God's dealings if he broke up his farm, and undertook such a long, perilous and uncertain voyage wholly of his own accord. He would be afraid lest the Lord might turn his antagonist, and withhold from him all those favours, without which even the most prosperous country becomes a desert, and the happiest home an abode of misery.

Hermann felt that there was much truth in this reasoning, although he could not quite share his friend's gloomy fears as to the possible consequences of his emigration. He could not see how the Lord could become an antagonist to a man who tried to improve his condition, since the desire for improvement was an instinct which had been implanted by God himself. It was true that as yet there was no urgent reason for removing, and he might quietly leave it to God to answer the question how to provide for his sons when they would come of age. But, thought he, Peter must admit that that sort of passive waiting upon the Lord might be dictated not only by pious humility, but also by easy-going selfishness, inasmuch as it was less trouble to him to leave matters as they were, and to tell his sons to care for themselves, than to travel to a distant country, and provide them with farms in time. He could not help remembering that text of Scripture, where the Apostle says that the children ought not to care for their parents, but the parents for their children. In his

opinion, it was *now* the time to strike the iron. His sons were all of them young, and at the age when one easily learns a foreign language, and without much trouble adapts one's self to the national character, the habits and customs of a foreign people. And as to the breaking-up of his farm, he believed that he would have to do that even apart from the emigration plan, owing to a railway which was to be made through the district. He saw no reason why, in that case, he should not go to America, where the largest farms were to be got at scarcely one-half the price of his own.

The next afternoon, the minister stepped into Hermann's room. He found Frau Stahl alone, and engaged in mending clothes. Hannah was in the dairy, and Hermann was away with the two eldest boys in the fields ploughing up a piece of land. The schoolmaster had taken the other boys out for a walk to the top of the Brunnenberg, which commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding district. The sun was now about setting, so that it was likely the father and the schoolmaster and the boys would be home shortly.

"Do you come to take your coffee with us to-night, Herr Pastor?" asked Frau Stahl, rising with a smile, and throwing the clothes on a chair in the corner. "Of course you do. Hermann will be back soon, and so will the master with the boys."

“Well, it was not exactly my intention to stay,” answered the minister, in a cordial tone; “but since you are bent upon detaining me for a couple of hours, I suppose I must submit. But then, you know, I must go and fetch my wife, for she would be sure to lecture me if I left her alone at home.”

“Of course, of course, Herr Pastor; and I will send Hannah round to the Fallmings and the Müllers, that they also may come with their wives, and we’ll have a nice evening together, with God’s blessing.”

An hour later a happy company of friends was gathered round Frau Stahl’s white-scoured tea-table, which was bending under the weight of the bread and butter, and other dainties, which were all produced on Hermann’s own farm, and made by the skill of his wife and daughter. While the guests enjoyed their neighbour’s hospitality, the conversation chiefly concerned the missionary meeting of the preceding day. Portions of the speeches which had been delivered were recalled to memory, and incidents from the various missionary reports, which had been read to the congregation were rehearsed with great sympathy. It was again observed that the difficulties and dangers which the faithful messengers of the Gospel had to encounter in the midst of uncivilised and often savage nations, and in unhealthy and inhospitable quarters of the globe, were very great; and at the close of the meal the minister gave out a missionary hymn, after

which he and two or three other friends engaged in prayer, for the Divine protection to the gospel-preachers in heathen countries, and for the spread of the knowledge of Christ among those ignorant people.

Coffee over, the men took their pipes and the women their knitting-work, and opportunity was given for general conversation on interesting questions of the day. Usually, on such occasions, the host read a portion of the Bible or a page of some other religious book by way of suggesting a subject. This time Hermann, who was anxious to hear the opinions of his friends about his plan of emigration, read the first chapter of the book of Ruth, which tells of the emigration of Elimelech with his wife and sons to the country of Moab. This story, he said, clearly showed that emigration, though often attended with many trials and difficulties, might yet be a good thing, inasmuch as it might proceed from a justifiable motive, and be productive of excellent results, both spiritual and temporal. That Elimelech's motive in emigrating from a land of starvation to a land of abundance was quite justifiable, nobody could reasonably deny. And that great blessings had been the consequence of his emigration was equally clear, since in the hand of Jehovah it was instrumental in restoring Naomi our and peace, and in bringing Ruth to the f the only true and living God.

To this Fallming, the shoemaker, replied that the blessings which his friend pointed to were certainly consequences of Elimelech's *emigration*, but he held it was equally true that those blessings were brought about by Naomi's *return*. In his opinion, a man who could find no bread in his own country was perfectly justified in stepping over into another country, where he might find bread, but as, by God's blessing, matters were not yet at that pass in Germany, he did not see how his dear friend and brother Hermann could, with any show of reason, point to his position as being a parallel to that of Elimelech. Thank God, famine was unknown in the good country of the Ruhr and the Wupper. There was plenty of bread, both wheat and rye, and carrots in summer, and sour-cROUT in winter, and therefore he could not see why people should go all the way to America to seek for provisions which they could find in their own country quite as well.

In this view of the matter Frau Fallming perfectly agreed with her husband. Besides, she would have her dear friend Hermann observe that whatever may have been the blessings which accrued to others from Elimelech's emigration, no blessings flowed from it to himself. He died, and so did his sons, and it might be that these fatal calamities were chastisements from God, showing his displeasure at the step the family had taken. It would be a fearful thing even to sup-

pose that Hermann and his sons might die in America in the same way, and that dear Frau Stahl and Hannah should come back, like Naomi and Ruth, clad in mourning and bathed in tears.

Tears filled the eyes of the good Frau, and the other female portion of the company were likewise moved; handkerchiefs soon covered their faces, and there was a solemn pause for a minute or two. Human faces, however, are very changeable in their expressions, as are human passions. The tears soon gave way to smiles, and even to scarcely-suppressed laughter, when Johann, Hermann's eldest son, a boy of sixteen, observed, with much simplicity, that, as it was not told in the chapter that they died from God's displeasure, it was much more natural to suppose that Elimelech and his sons, having come from a famine-stricken land to a country abounding with provisions, might have over-eaten themselves, and died from want of due self-restraint. Therefore, to guard against such a temptation, he thought it would be wise not to delay emigration till famine came into the land, but to start in such circumstances as would enable one to enter the new country with a full stomach.

Müller, the grocer, hereupon observed that there was sense in what the lad said. If emigration was inevitable, it was far better to carry it out in affluent than in straitened circumstances. But it was not certain that affluence at the beginning always secured

affluence in the end. Many a well-to-do family, who set out with a nice sum of money, lost the whole of it on the other side of the ocean. He could not help here referring to the case of Henry Prizel, who went to London, a few years before, with five hundred gold English sovereigns in his pocket, and set up a turner's shop, which, however, proved a complete failure, so that he died in utter misery, leaving his son Daniel in the workhouse.

To this Hermann observed that he knew Henry's case very well, since he was a far-off cousin of his own; but Henry's history could not justly be quoted as a specimen of wise emigration. His case entirely differed from that. To settle down in a European town as a tradesman was one thing, and to emigrate to America to become a farmer there was another. The two things, in fact, admitted of no comparison. As to Daniel, he was happy to be able to tell tolerably satisfactory news, for he had recently received a letter from him. He was not in the workhouse, but employed in a sugar-house near the Thames, where he earned a sovereign a week. It was hard work, and he was afraid his health would not be able to stand it. But he hoped that his cousin Hermann might find some employment for him in Germany, since he had not yet altogether forgotten the German language.

"How old was he when he left this country?" asked the minister.

“ Twelve or thirteen, I think,” answered Müller.
“ He could not have been older than that.”

“ So he must be about twenty now,” said the minister. “ Why, Hermann, if your mind is made up to travel to America, you could easily take him along with you.”

“ No, no. You *shall* not go—you *must* not go,” cried several voices ; and again the conversation as to whether it was according to God’s Word to leave one’s country without urgent necessity, took a fresh start. The minister now expressed his opinion, and so did the schoolmaster. . Many texts were quoted, and many sayings of wise, godly men, who had expressed themselves against what they called the emigration fever, were called to remembrance.

The winter passed on, and spring came into the land, and Hermann’s resolution was unchanged.

The whole village was astir on the day of the departure of the family. To the good people it was like a dismal funeral day. Every one who could spare a couple of hours followed the carts which conveyed the emigrants and their luggage to the station. There were the minister, and the schoolmaster, and the shoemaker, and the grocer, with their wives, and a great many other friends and neighbours, who surrounded the carts, shook hands with the departing ones on the road, and walked along, some weeping and some sobbing. And when they had seen them

off with the train for Rotterdam, they returned home in deep silence, for their hearts were sad. It was to them as if they had carried a father and a brother to the grave.

According to an agreement made with a house at Cologne, the family proceeded to London to embark on board the "Borussia," a German emigrant-ship in which they had engaged berths as second-class passengers to New York. On their arrival they liked their accommodation well, and though they marvelled much at the innumerable multitude of big ships in the dock where theirs was lying, and were almost bewildered in the midst of the new and undreamt-of objects their eyes now beheld, they were yet glad to learn that they were to sail in two days, for they longed to reach their destination. Milwaukee, a Wisconsin town, on the western shore of Lake Michigan, was the point whither they had to travel, as Hermann's brother Dietrich was to meet them there with carts and horses to convey them to his house, which was about five days' journey further westward. Adjoining his farm were the acres he had bought for Hermann, who had sent him all the money he had realised from the sale of his farm-stöcking, save some forty pounds, which he had kept to pay travelling expenses from New York to Milwaukee. So everything being well arranged, as was thought, the good

family had no other desire but to start as quickly as possible. This desire, however, was sadly frustrated. Owing to a defect which was discovered in the vessel, her departure was delayed for a week, in order that she might be repaired. Crowded with emigrants, and wedged in between numerous other vessels within the comparatively narrow space of a London dock, and with the vernal sun shining with unusual heat upon the deck, the cabins, and especially the second-class cabin, were actually turned into ovens. Our friends, who had been accustomed to breathe the pure, invigorating mountain-air of Germany, could not possibly stand this great and sudden change. Frau Stahl took ill, and so did three of the children. The doctor urgently advised Hermann to take lodgings during the days the ship was to be under repair, as he had no doubt change of air would soon put the invalids right again. Three rooms were accordingly taken for a week in the Commercial Road, but the doctor's expectation was not confirmed. The disease of Frau Stahl and the boys turned out to be scarlatina. When the ship was ready to sail, they could not possibly think of going with her, the less so that Hannah also took ill. Nothing was left for poor Hermann but to take his luggage out of the "*Borussia*," and allow her to sail without himself or family.

And now the position of the poor pilgrims became very trying indeed. Hitherto they had experienced

no difficulty as to the language, since the captain, the doctor, the crew, and by far the greater portion of the passengers on board the "Borussia" were Germans. But the moment the ship was gone, poor Hermann found himself a stranger amongst people of whose language he did not understand one word. The apartments which he had rented were good and well-furnished, but they cost a pound a week. The doctor, who came every day, sometimes twice a day, charged half-a-crown a visit. Provisions, too, were excessively dear in Hermann's opinion. Only think, sixteenpence, and even eighteenpence for a pound of butter (and such butter as he would have been ashamed to sell from his farm, and he used to sell his for eightpence or tenpence !) Beef, pork, and ham were double the price they were in his village ! Rye bread—that dainty for a German palate—was not to be got in the whole of London ! The dinner which his landlady cooked for him and the two boys who were not yet attacked by the disease cost eighteenpence a day, and was scarcely eatable, as everything was cooked without salt, and the vegetables were like grass, and the potatoes like frozen turnips.

"My dear," he said one evening, after he had sat down by the bedside of his wife, who, as well as the other invalids, was progressing favourably, though every possible care had still to be taken to prevent relapses—"my dear," he said, "when it pleases the

Lord to restore you and the children, we must leave these apartments and take cheaper ones."

"Dear husband, the Lord has indeed brought us into deep ways. I hope you don't lose your trust in Him?"

"I do not, darling, but it is exceedingly difficult for me to get along with the people here, as I cannot understand them. I never felt so much alone in the world."

"Have you been to the hospital?"

This question of Frau Stahl's had reference to Daniel Prizel. On their arrival in London, Hermann had repaired to Daniel's address, as it was his intention to take him along with them to America. But the landlord told him that the young man had got the fever, and was lying in the hospital.

"I have not, dear," was the answer. "How could I have gone? I have not been away from you and the children since you took ill."

"Well, then, go now. Perhaps Daniel is sufficiently recovered to be able to help you through in this great Babel. He knows the ways and the language."

It was with great difficulty that Hermann found out Daniel's hospital, and it cost him not a little trouble to find Daniel after he had found the hospital. The young man was quite enraptured when the foreigner who approached his bed made himself known

to him as his cousin Hermann Stahl from Kirchheim. He kissed him as a child kisses its father.

"So you have come at length!" exclaimed he. "And are you going to take me with you to America now? I am all but recovered, and if needs be I can go with you even as early as to-morrow."

Hermann told his story. An expression of deep grief clouded the beaming face of Daniel.

"But at any rate, the Cologne emigrant house will be bound to forward you to New York?" said he, in an interrogative tone.

"I think it will. I wrote to Cologne, but have got no answer as yet. It is their duty, of course; and surely they won't be so dishonest as to take advantage of our misfortunes."

Daniel sighed. He had not much confidence in the honesty of continental emigrant houses. "Most of them are swindlers," he muttered between his teeth.

"Could you come and see us this week, Daniel?"

"Of course, dear cousin. I shall be with you to-morrow."

"But we have scarlatina in the house."

"Never mind; I have had it. But you ought to be very careful with that disease. It is much more dangerous in this country than with us in Germany. Complaints may result from it such as we never hear of on the Continent."

The next day Daniel was sitting with his cousin in their front room. The poor lad was much emaciated and very weak. He had got the fever in the sugar-house, where he had to work all day in a temperature of from 100 to 110 degrees. He could not return to the works, as it would kill him. What he was to do now he knew not, and he had not so much as a farthing in his pocket.

"Of course you will stay with us," said Hermann. "Henceforth you are a member of the family. We will share weal and woe with each other. You will be of great service to me, as you know this terrible place and its terrible language."

"You find a great difference between this and Kirchheim, I suppose?" said Daniel.

"I do indeed. I never could have thought that there was such a place in the world as this. People do not live here in their houses, but in omnibuses and railway carriages. The whole of this place is one huge mill, in which one is like to lose one's hearing and understanding from the constant buzz and whir."

As the patients were progressing favourably, it was resolved to look out for cheaper lodgings, for Hermann calculated that, if he went on in this way, he would be penniless within six weeks. Fortunately he had among his luggage, which was stowed away in a shed at the back of the house, a sufficient number of beds and mattresses, a complete cooking ap-

paratus, and many other pieces of furniture. Daniel accordingly rented four unfurnished rooms on the first floor in a back street off the Commercial Road at twelve shillings a-week. Chairs, tables, and bedsteads were bought at a low price at an auction in the neighbourhood, and when the invalids had recovered so far as to be capable of being removed without danger, the family went to the new abode.

Sunday came, and as none of the family were able to understand an English sermon, and the German Chapel was too far off, Hermann officiated as priest in his house, and conducted a regular service after the German fashion, by reading a sermon out of one of the collections with which the literature of his country is so well provided. He had brought several volumes of this kind in the expectation of using them in Wisconsin, where, as his brother had written, no church or chapel was to be seen for a score of miles round about. Service over, Hannah opened the door to step into the back room, which had been appropriated for a kitchen, when she started back with an exclamation of fright, as the passage and the stairs were crowded with people—men, women, and children.

Hermann and Daniel rushed at once to the doorway.

“What is all this about?” asked Daniel. “Is there anything the matter?”

"The singing, sir," cried some of the intruders. "Please give us another tune."

Indeed the singing of the family was worth hearing. Frau Stahl and Hannah had beautiful treble voices, Daniel sang a good tenor, Hermann's voice was a deep bass, which made the floor of the room quiver, and the boys took the alto part with faultless accuracy. And there was little to wonder at in this, for Master Peter Vormann, who was an excellent musician, had made the Kirchheim school famous for its singing, so that whenever there was a festival in the neighbourhood, and a chorus to be got up, the Kirchheim boys were always engaged for the alto part.

The unanimous request of this unexpected audience was gladly complied with. Another German hymn was sung, which the people listened to with breathless attention, and when Daniel at the close shut the door, the crowd dispersed, tendering loud applause.

"I see those savages are at least human beings," said Hermann. "They have a taste for our *Deutschen Lieder*."

"Savages!" cried Daniel, "let them not hear you speak in that way. They would soon do for you."

"Why, but they *are* savages," said Hermann; "they spend their days in nothing but drinking and fighting."

"Even the women here go to the public-house,"

said Hannah, "and stand at the bar 'dramming,' as they call it, with the men till they are drunk."

"Don't the women do the same in our country?" asked Daniel.

"I never saw a drunk woman in our country," answered Frau Stahl, in an indignant tone, "except perhaps on the occasion of some fair or popular festival; for a woman to frequent a public-house is a thing altogether unknown among us; such a one would be looked upon as a disgusting outcast by the whole population."

"The women also smoke in this country," said Johann, the eldest of the boys. "I saw an old yellow-faced woman the other day who looked exactly like a witch, as she smoked away from a small stump of a pipe not longer than my thumb. Ach! it looked hideous!"

"Ah! that must have been an Irishwoman or a gipsy," replied Daniel. "Englishwomen don't smoke; they hate it."

"Oh dear!" sighed Frau Stahl, "among what a set of people have we fallen! We have become like Israel in Babylon."

In the afternoon the family united for Bible-reading. The 34th Psalm was taken up for discussion.

"Shall we sing?" asked Hannah. "I am afraid we'll have a crowd again."

"Not likely," said Daniel, "the people are in the

public-house now, or out for a walk, or taking a nap to sleep off the drink."

"Never mind the crowd," said Hermann. "Let them come again. Perhaps the Lord may touch their hearts through our *lieder*."

The beautiful psalm was read. Hermann had selected it to console himself and his family in their present distressing circumstances. There was some similarity, he observed, between their position and that of David at the time when he composed the psalm, since he found himself in the land of the Philistines, to which he had emigrated.

"True," remarked Frau Stahl, "and there is also this similarity between him and us, that he, like us, got into his difficulties through his imprudence, and through his not waiting upon the Lord. For if he had fully committed his lot to the hands of God, he would not have sought refuge with the heathen. So the Lord drove him away from that place, and compelled him to return to the land he had recklessly deserted. And I am afraid the Lord is going to take the same course with us now, for we have met with nothing but adversity since we left our good Kirchheim and our lovely farm, on which the Lord had blessed us for so many years."

It was rather in a desponding tone that Frau Stahl uttered these words. Nor was her reasoning altogether groundless. The members of the family had

already several times discussed what course they should take, supposing the Cologne house refused to provide them with passages in another ship. It was evident that the money which they had still in hand would not last them longer than two months. Hermann had written to his brother Dietrich, requesting him to send back the money he had deposited with him, but it was uncertain whether that sum would come in time to prevent starvation. So it became more and more a matter of earnest consideration with them whether the wisest course would not be to return to Kirchheim before their last shilling was spent and they were left penniless in this immense metropolis. But the thought of returning poor and helpless to Kirchheim, of asking bread and shelter from those same friends who had so urgently dissuaded them from taking this step, was almost bitterer than the prospect of begging for their livelihood in the streets of London. So, whichever way they looked, they saw before them a dark cloud, and there was thus reason for the sad tone in which Frau Stahl—who, to tell the truth, had never been very strongly in favour of the emigration plan—made her observation. Her husband, however, perceiving that if courage and hope were lost everything would be lost, and feeling his responsibility as the head and support of the family, encouraged himself in God, as David did when the town of Ziklag was burnt.

“Dear wife,” he said, “I think you are right in pointing to the present as days of deep humiliation for us. Perhaps we did not earnestly seek the Lord’s face before resolving to quit our land. Perhaps also we have sinned in some other way, so that the chastening hand of God is now heavy upon us. But we should remember that David, though he had brought difficulties upon himself by his imprudence, yet continued to trust in God, knowing that the Lord would not forsake him on account of his transgressions. ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous,’ he says, ‘but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.’ Let us walk in that same faith now. If God chooses to deal with us according to our sins, we have nothing to hope. But Jesus died for us, and bore our sins in His precious body on the tree. We will plead on that ground, my dears, and firmly believe that, though we may have erred, yet our Heavenly Father, who bought us at a price, will not forsake us. He never said to us that He will only be our God provided we sin no more. We are living in the day of grace, and the fountain that was opened against every pollution on Calvary is flowing still as abundantly as ever.”

While the poor pilgrims were in this way refreshing their souls at the waters of consolation that flow from the Word of God, a terrible shuffling, crying, and screaming were heard over their heads. Then

there was a bounce on the floor, as if some heavy body were falling, followed by the cry "Murder!" Hermann and Daniel rushed up the stairs, and stepped into the room whence the noise issued. A strange sight was presented to their view. Their neighbour, who was a carman, was standing over his wife with an uplifted pewter-pot in his hand; he had knocked her down and was beating her unmercifully; a table had been upset in the struggle, and behind it two little children were cowering and crying piteously. Hermann threw himself between the two. To wrench the pewter-pot from the drunk man's hand, to drag him away from his victim, and raise up the poor woman who was bleeding profusely from the head, was the work of a moment. Frau Stahl, on her husband's calling out for her, came up with a basin of water and a sponge, and washed the poor woman's head, which, though badly cut, yet showed no dangerous wounds. Hannah took the two children, while Hermann and Daniel replaced the table on its legs. During these proceedings the perpetrator of all this mischief, whom Hermann had pushed down on a chair, fell asleep, and snored away like a Turk.

"Thank God, he sleeps," said the woman, "and he will sleep on now till to-morrow morning; and when he awakes, he will remember nothing of all that has happened, and be as soft and meek as a lamb. Oh,

that cursed drink! but for that he *would* be such a good husband!"

When the family was assembled in their own room again, Frau Stahl fell into a fit, and Hannah burst into tears. Such a scene was too much for the tender nerves of the good women of Kirchheim.

Meanwhile the circumstances of the family became more and more straitened. The answer from the Cologne house, which at length arrived, was altogether unfavourable. "The Company," the letter said, "had made no other contract with Mr. Stahl than to send him and his family to New York by the 'Borussia.' The Company were surprised at learning that Mr. Stahl and family had left that ship in London. Mr. Stahl, the Company admitted, was perfectly at liberty to do so, but he ought to have known that by this action he had forfeited any further claims upon the Company, since there were no stipulations made in the contract by which the Company were obliged to provide him and his family with berths in another ship."

After the receipt of this letter, the question what course to take was again discussed,—whether they should return to Kirchheim, or stay and wait for the letter from brother Dietrich? The family held a special prayer-meeting for the purpose of asking Divine guidance in this important matter. At length they resolved to remain, since their property was in

America, and London was at any rate nearer to that than Kirchheim, where they had no business at all, and nothing but poverty could be their lot. But as the money which was in Hermann's possession was fast dwindling away, they quitted their lodgings and rented instead two large rooms in a court at eight shillings per week.

Fortunately the people who inhabited this court were not of the worst kind. With the exception of one disreputable house, nothing offensive to decency was to be seen in it. The houses were mostly occupied by working-men, costermongers, pedlars, &c. Frau Stahl kept the children as much in the house as she could; and Daniel spent a great portion of his time in teaching them English, writing, and the elements of arithmetic, &c. At these lessons Hermann was also often present, as he deemed it wise to learn as much as he could of the "terrible language."

One day Johann, who had been out on an errand, came home with a black eye, and all bespattered with mud. The whole family was in alarm. After having been cleaned and washed, and refreshed by a warm cup of coffee, Johann told his story. On returning from his errand, he found the entrance of the court blocked up by a crowd of people standing in a circle round two lads who were fighting. It was evident that the one, a boy of scarcely fifteen, was not at all a match for his antagonist, a big lad of seven-

teen; consequently the former was being beaten unmercifully, the blood running from his nose. As none of the bystanders seemed disposed to interfere, Johann stepped between the pugilists and tried to separate them. A stout lad of his own age and stature at once came forward, and in a provoking tone asked him what right he had to interfere. In his broken English he answered, "Because little boy too little for big boy." The stout lad then uttered a volley of words which Johann did not understand, and clenching his fists, placed himself in a fighting attitude.

"No, not fight," said Johann.

"Why not, you coward, fight!" cried the bystanders, who now formed a circle round them.

"No, not fight," said Johann. "Christians no fight."

"Take that, you Christian," cried the lad, and at the same moment Johann felt the lad's fist come down with great force on his eye. Now Johann was an extraordinarily strong lad, whose muscles were powerfully developed by the invigorating German mountain air, and who was reckoned an adept in the *Turn Uebungen*—i.e., the gymnastical exercises, which in Prussia form a considerable part of the popular school training. Before his antagonist could launch a second blow he caught him by the waist, lifted him up from the ground and threw him down. Then throwing

himself upon him, he kept him under till after some fruitless struggling, he promised not to renew the affray. Johann then let him go, and stepped home amidst the loud applause of the crowd, some of whom tried to force him into a public-house to receive a glass of beer as a token of their admiration. It was with difficulty he escaped from them.

From that day Johann went in the court by the name of "the Christian."

"Well, those foreigners over there are better folks than the whole lot of us," said Mrs. Harding, the pedlar's wife, who was standing chatting with another woman in the doorway of her house.

"Ay, what you say is quite true," said Mrs. Field, the mason's wife, who lived in a room over Hermann's. "They are religious people. They sing and pray twice every Sunday, and every morning and evening in the week."

"What in all the world may those people's business be?" asked Mary Prescott, the cobbler's daughter. "They seem to have no trade. The old man is always at home, and I never see his wife and daughter in the street, except for a walk or an errand."

"Oh, I know," said Mrs. Harding. "One of them, a nice young man of twenty or so, told me the other day that they were on their way to America, but had been detained by fever and were waiting for a letter."

"Poor folks; they seem to be hard up," said Mary Prescott. "I saw that young man at the pawnbroker's a couple of days ago."

"Why, they haven't a stick of furniture left, scarcely," observed Mrs. Field. "Yesterday I happened to pass their room when the door was standing open. A blind horse couldn't do much harm there."

Indeed, the description was not exaggerated. The Germans were now reduced to a state of complete poverty. Hermann had tried every day to obtain some employment, but owing to his total ignorance of the language all his attempts had been frustrated. At length Daniel found some work with a turner, for which he got ten shillings a week. He paid his wages faithfully into the hands of Frau Stahl. It was upon his labour indeed that the family were living for the present. How eagerly did they look out for a letter from brother Dietrich every day! But in vain. Every day Hermann returned with empty hands from the Post Office. Poor fellow, he was often in low spirits.

"My dear," said his wife, who perceived that now it was *her* turn to lay hold of the anchor of faith—"My dear," said she, one evening after they had finished their scanty supper, "let us not lose sight of our blessed Lord. He is here with us now, though we cannot see Him. He knows all our wants."

“Oh, blessed Jesus! come and console us;” ejaculated Hannah. “Thou hast suffered so much for us; Thou knowest what suffering is.”

“Father, let us sing that hymn of Paul Gerhardt’s: ‘Commit your ways to Jesus,’” said one of the boys.

“Are you not too hungry to sing, Bernhard?” asked Hermann, in a melancholy voice, stroking the boy’s hair. “Oh, what a grief? And it is all my fault. How *could* I be so foolish as to take you out of our lovely Kirchheim, to plunge you into this dark pit! The Lord knows I am willing to suffer ten times over for it, but to see *you* suffer for *my* sins—it will break my heart.”

But Hannah raised the tune, and the others joined in with cheerful voices, and Hermann could not help seconding with his deep bass, sad as his heart was.

While they were singing, a knock was heard at the door, and in stepped Bob Harding, the pedlar. He had a large pie in his hand.

“Is this Christian’s?” he asked.

“Yes, we Christians,” answered Hermann. “And I hope you one, too, good friend.”

“He means Johann,” said Daniel in German to Hermann.

“Are you that fine fellow who took my son’s part the other day?” said the pedlar to Daniel.

"No, I am not ; it was him," said Daniel, pointing to Johann.

"I brought this mutton pie for you," said he, placing the pie before Johann. "And my wife's and Henry's compliments, sir. You did well. I was away in the country a-hawking, but on coming home yesterday I learnt what had happened last week. I hope you will not refuse to accept this small present, sir; it is not much, but we are poor people. I wish I could do more."

The simple-hearted candid tone in which the pedlar uttered these words, and his thoroughly honest though rough-looking face, made a very agreeable impression upon the company.

"This is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," said Hermann to his wife. Then turning to Harding, he tendered him his hand: "I tank you," said he; "sit yourself, sir."

The pedlar seated himself upon the chair which one of the boys offered him.

Hermann then, in broken English, endeavoured to speak to him on the subject ever uppermost in his mind—the love of God in Jesus Christ.

"Are you not Germans?" asked Harding, after a while.

"We are."

"I think you would like to make the acquaintance of Mr. Wasserman; or do you already know him?"

"I do not. Who is he."

"Why, he is the German missionary to the sailors in the docks. He is a very nice man, Mr. Wasserman is. I will send him to you. Hoping you will like the pie, I must bid you good evening, sir."

The pedlar's hope was fully realized. He could scarcely have reached his house before each member of the family had a piece of the pie between thumb and fingers. Hermann pronounced a blessing, and when the welcome refreshment had disappeared, the beautiful hymn, "Now thank ye all the Lord," echoed through the room.

This was a sweet drop in the bitter cup of affliction. Hermann made the observation that the inhabitants of this "terrible place" with its "terrible language," were not *all* savages. Frau Stahl added that she had no doubt but the Lord had much people in this great city.

Next day the post brought a letter from Kirchheim enclosing one from brother Dietrich. He asked in a tone of alarm how it was that they had not come with the "Borussia." It was obvious from the date of his letter that he had never received theirs. This was a fresh blow to the hopes of the poor family. It was now certain that they need not expect any money from America; and the last article they could dispose of was pawned. What were they to do?

They spent the evening in prayer, without, however, forgetting the *Deutschen Lieder*.

"My dears," said Hermann, "as long as there is a Saviour in heaven there is reason for us to sing."

The next morning Hermann went out for a walk. About noon he came back.

"I have found work," he said. "A pound a-week."

"Is it true?" cried Frau Stahl, joyfully. "And where?"

"At the sugar-house. I begin to-morrow morning."

Frau Stahl burst into tears, and so did the children. They knew from Daniel's description what it was to work in the sugar-house.

"You shall not go there!" cried she. "Will you add to our affliction by making me a widow and these poor children orphans?"

"Dear wife, the Lord will be my strength. He will sustain me, knowing what I shall be labouring for."

During that day there was a continuous struggle of love between the father and his family: the one arguing that it was his duty even to lay down his life for them if necessary; the others insisting that it was his duty to spare his life as much as he could.

The sun had just set, and Hannah had scarcely lit the thin candle which cast a gloomy light through the

room, when a knock was heard at the door. The pedlar made his appearance, accompanied by a stranger, whom he introduced as Mr. Wasserman.

"Oh! *Ein Deutscher Bruder!*" cried the family, simultaneously.

"I go," whispered the pedlar into Johann's ear, "as I don't understand your gibberish." While uttering these words he slipped half-a-crown into the lad's hand.

A most agreeable conversation took place between the family and Mr. Wasserman, who proved to be a truly good man. Something for supper was bought with Bob's half-crown, of which Mr. Wasserman was kind enough to partake. Many a dear German hymn was sung, and Mr. Wasserman gladly stayed to have worship with his friends. He told them that he was employed as a missionary by a company of six wealthy shipowners, two of whom were Germans. He advised Hermann not to go to the sugar-house the next day, but to call upon him.

The next morning Hermann, accompanied by the missionary, found himself in the office of Messrs. Krübner, Bären and Co. Mr. Krübner received him very kindly, and listened attentively to his story.

"If what you say be true," he observed, "we certainly must try to help you. Meanwhile I will write to the clergyman of Kirchheim to obtain information." Then looking at Hermann, whose honest open coun-

tenance pleased him well; he added: "We have a meeting to-night in our schoolroom. If you like to attend with your wife and children I will give you tickets."

"Is it a German meeting?" asked Hermann.

"No, it is in an English Church; but you will be able to pick up enough to make you enjoy it."

The whole family was that evening in the large schoolroom of — Church. There was tea first, during which the merry chat of the crowded assembly buzzed cheerfully through the room. Then there were addresses by several speakers, and hymns and prayers. Though Hermann and his wife understood but little of what was said, yet their hearts leaped for joy at the sight.

"What a pleasant evening!" he said when at home again. "It was just such a meeting as we used to have at Barmen, except for the open air."

"You see," said his wife, "it is just as I told you the other day. All the people of this place are not savages. The Lord has many children here, depend upon it, Hermann."

A fortnight later, on a bright autumn morning, the "Atlantic," a large merchant ship belonging to the firm of Messrs. Krübner, Bären and Co., weighed anchor for New York. The captain was a German, and for the first time in his life had passengers on board, as he had not been in the habit of conveying anything

save goods. He was glad to receive our friends, however, for he was a good man, and he knew that they were looking out for even a better country than that they were going to start for now.

“Good-bye, dear friends,” said Mr. Krübner, shaking hands with Hermann when the signal for departure was given. “May the Lord carry you safely to your destination.”

While uttering these words he handed an envelope to Hermann, and disappeared. It contained a fifty-pound note, and inside was written, “For the journey to Wisconsin.”

The last intelligence received in London by way of Kirchheim was that the family were doing exceedingly well, that their house was all but built, and that they did not know how to thank and praise the Lord enough for His unspeakable goodness.

A VISIT TO MARIE, A FRENCH HEROINE.

IT was a charming afternoon in July when, with my friend Madame Sancourt, I walked up one of the hills on the border of the Lake of Geneva. We walked slowly, not merely because the road was rather steep and the atmosphere warm, but also because, with almost every fresh step, Nature disclosed new beauties to our delighted eyes. It seemed as if the Creator had here brought together all the treasures of His inexhaustible store to bless and beautify this earth of ours. If we desired to admire Nature in the magnificence of her grandeur we had only to wait for the moment when a winding of the path enabled us to look through a gap in the mountain range, towards the south, where Mont Blanc stood at a distance before us, piercing the sky with his snow-clad summit. A few steps more and another winding brought us to an opening, through which we had a panoramic view of the loveliest of valleys, where the evergreen fir

groves and the flowery meadows, the broad shades of the hills, and the picturesque villas basking in the afternoon glow, formed as it were a concert of colours, which was like music to the eyes. Then again, turning to the west, the lake spread itself out before our view, its azure crystal contrasting with the everlasting verdure of the hill-slopes, and reflecting the numerous houses, villas, castles, and churches which adorn its banks, like the fantastic carvings in the frame of some majestic mirror.

Language is too poor fully to express what we thought, felt, and enjoyed. Madame Sancourt had seen these beauties of Nature perhaps a thousand times before, yet she gazed at them as if, like myself, she now saw them for the first time.

“The grass withers and the flowers fade,” she said, when at length we turned down a road that led into a village in the valley, “but the ideas of God which they are meant to express are always fresh and new. What sublimity of design, what a sense of the good, the beautiful, the true, must there be in that Mind in which the conceptions of such *tableaux* arose, and what skill and power to compel dead matter thus to realise those conceptions !”

Madame Sancourt was a painter, but she was not one of those artists who, while admiring the beauty of Nature, are blind to the truth which it embodies.

“To see the work is heaven,” she said; “to see

Him who made it must be the heaven of heavens ! Ah !” she added, after a pause ; “ that was a true word which the Lord spoke when He said, ‘ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ ”

This was not an expression of the mere sensitiveness common to artists. What I mean is, she did not quote that text merely for the sake of the beauty or sublimity of the thought it conveyed. It was the expression of a grave truth which had engrossed all her thoughts, feelings, and desires. To witness a pure heart, cleansed through faith in Christ, was a greater enjoyment to her than even the sight of the most charming landscape or the grandest masterpiece of art.

We were on our way to partake of such an enjoyment now. We were going to visit blind Marie, an old woman, who lived in the village at the bottom of the hill. This, however, was not Madame Sancourt’s first visit. She had known Marie for years, and, weather permitting, she used to spend a few hours with her every Friday afternoon, to read to her and to comfort her in her affliction. And she never came with empty hands either, as witness the little basket which she this time allowed me to carry, and which contained a sweet-smelling nosegay, a dozen of new-laid eggs, and some of the choicest fruits of her garden. What the basket contained in winter time I cannot tell ; but love is exhaustless in its contrivances ;

it always knows the secret of turning water into wine, and gathering roses in a desert.

We entered a neat-looking cottage at the entrance of the village. The door was opened by an old woman, who had a wooden leg. I have seldom seen such an ugly face, but, at the same time, I never saw a face the ugliness of which was so perfectly subdued and overcome by the kind cordial love, which expressed itself through each one of those irregular features. Good old Jeannette! I always remember her with pleasure. She was a dear ugly creature.

"Ah, you have come at last!" she exclaimed, with delight. "I say, madame, it is, indeed, too bad to keep us hanging so long between hope and fear. You know when the clock strikes four, and you have not made your appearance, we get very anxious about you. But it is all right now, and I hope you will stay long this time."

The loquacious woman hobbled away through a passage, which led into a little garden. A venerable-looking blind woman, apparently about sixty-five, was sitting on a rustic seat, busily engaged in knitting. Nor was she by any means what you would call a beautiful old woman. It was evident from the cast of her features that, by birth, she must have belonged to the poorer class of society. But there was an uncommonly sweet expression noticeable in her weather-beaten face, a solemn calmness, which seemed

to have been acquired through many a hard inward struggle.

“Oh, I’m so glad you have come!” she said, as Madame Sancourt impressed a hearty kiss upon her cheek. “I have got a letter from Hadschi, which you must read. It is such a good letter.”

“From Hadschi!” Madame Sancourt exclaimed joyfully. “And how is she? Is she doing well?”

“Excellently. But you will learn all about her from her letter? And whom have you brought with you?”

“A friend from England, who upon hearing of your love to Jesus, was desirous of making your acquaintance.”

I took Marie’s hand, and she responded with a cordial pressure. Jeannette now brought chairs for us, and Marie said,—

“Friends from England are always welcome. It was through an English child of God that I was brought to the Saviour. But that happened more than thirty years ago, and she is in heaven now; at least, I think she must be, for I have never got any intelligence from her or about her for twenty-five years.”

“Were you in England at that time?” I asked.

“No, I never was in England,” she answered with a smile; “though I often wondered that I never got there, for I have been wandering about a great deal

since that conversation with Louisa Munro, which I shall never forget as long as I live."

"Our dear Marie has gone through many a strange experience in her lifetime," said Madame Sancourt, gently laying her hand upon that of her blind friend; "and she will gladly tell you something about the Lord's dealings with her; will you not, dear?"

"Of course, of course," was the ready answer; "but we must first read Hadschi's letter. I long to hear it read again, especially as there are some expressions in it which Jeannette could not well make out."

Jeannette, who had in the meantime emptied Madame Sancourt's basket in the kitchen and placed the fragrant nosegay in a glass vase, now took her seat beside us.

"Why," she said very merrily, in reference to Marie's last remark, "I venture to say I have learnt to read my good French language perfectly, but Hadschi scribbles down names which only Turks and Moors could pronounce. That *isn't* a language for Christian people."

"But who is Hadschi?" I asked.

"A dear Christian sister at Algiers," said Madame Sancourt, "whom the Lord converted from Moham-medanism to the love of Christ, through the instrumentality of our Marie."

"I will tell you about her by-and-bye," Marie

said ; “ and you will love her when you know her story.”

The letter was then read. As to style and language, it certainly was a curious document, and I could not wonder at good Jeannette not having been able to decipher every word, for there were many expressions which, but for Marie’s explanations, would have been perfectly unintelligible to me. The spirit and purport of the letter, on the other hand, were most excellent and edifying. The writer of it was evidently a true child of God, overflowing with the love of Jesus, through whom she had found forgiveness of all her sins, and in whom she rejoiced as the only and sure foundation of her hope and peace for time and for eternity. It seemed to me from her letter as if she were engaged as a nurse in some hospital. She wrote with great joy of three or four Mussulmans whom she had been the means, in God’s hand, of leading to Jesus before their death. But it appeared that she had to suffer a great deal of annoyance and opposition both from the Mohammedans and the Roman Catholic priests, because her Gospel work was making much progress among the people of the district in which she laboured.

“ What power of faith !” I said ; “ and that in a Turkish woman too ! She puts many a Christian to shame.”

“ She does, indeed,” said Marie ; “ and so do the

Turks in many respects. They are commonly cried down and spoken of as fanatics, but their fanaticism is owing to their religion, not to their character. They are on the whole a noble, honest, serious people; that which they acknowledge as truth and religion is everything to them. Theirs is not that light-minded flip-pant spirit, so common, alas! to our nation, which has no scruple in trifling with the highest and most serious concerns of mankind. Whatever the Turks may be, scoffers they are not. They may err in religion, and in their error commit great sins; but it is only because they throw heart and soul into what they believe to be agreeable to God, and conducive to their future happiness. They are a thoroughly *believing* people, and if once their faith is directed to the right object, you will find them prepared to sacrifice themselves body and soul for the spread of the knowledge of it. Such, at least, is my dear beloved Hadschi. I never met with a more determined and dangerous opponent so long as she believed that I was an enemy of God. But no sooner did she see her mistake, and learn the truth as it is in Jesus, than she became the most devoted friend and the stanchest ally I ever had in my struggle for the Cross against the Crescent."

"And how did that remarkable change come about?" I asked.

"We were together in the service——"

"Permit me to interrupt you," Madame Sancourt

interposed. "Would it give you too much trouble to tell the story of your life to my friend? It will enable him the better to understand how you became acquainted with Hadschi."

"But you have heard it so often," answered Marie; "I am afraid it will be rather tedious to you."

"And if you should tell it for the thousandth time," cried Jeannette, "I am assured madame would listen with the same pleasure as if she were hearing it for the first time. It is just like a Bible story, showing that Jesus knows how to make his enemies his friends, and how He works in the soul of a poor lost sinner."

"Well, then," said Marie, "to begin at the beginning:—I was born of Roman Catholic parents at a village near Marseilles, and trained up for kitchen work, as my father kept an inn, where many people used to dine. I was thus perfectly instructed in the art of preparing food for the body; but of the food that nourishes the soul I knew next to nothing. I could read and write well, but that there was such a book as the Word of God I knew not. I used to go to mass every Sunday, but what it really meant I could not tell. I said my prayers to the image of Mary, but who Mary was I did not care to know, and nobody sought to tell me. I was a careless, merry-hearted pleasure-loving girl, though from an innate sense of respectability and decency I always kept clear of disorderly conduct. Adversities deprived my father

of the means of subsistence, and brought him to the grave. As my mother had died a few years previously, I was left alone in the world at the age of eighteen. I went to Marseilles, and got a situation as cook in a gentleman's house.

“My master was a Greek, who carried on an extensive shipping trade with the Levant. His wife, I believe, was a Jewess. But, indeed, whether either of them had any religion at all I cannot tell, for I never saw them go to church or chapel, nor engage in prayer. My fellow-servants were stanch Catholics, but just as ignorant as I was. Our mistress permitted us to attend worship regularly, but as I had often to cook a sumptuous dinner for a numerous company on Sunday, I frequently stayed away from church, and at length left off church-going altogether. I did so with the less scruple because I observed that my fellow-servants did not become a bit wiser or better for all their church-going and *Paternosters*. Some of them were very bad characters indeed, and these were exactly the most bigoted of the lot. I considered myself far superior to them as to virtue and honesty, and since I did not find that I became less virtuous and honest by leaving off church-going and praying, I saw no reason to resume those habits which I now looked upon as quite useless.

“Still, I did not feel quite at ease with what I called my ‘common-sense religion.’ Often when alone in my bedroom I would look up to the stars that glittered

in the sky above me, and think: 'The people who inhabit those beautiful worlds must be very happy, and a great deal better than any of us. I wonder whether I shall go there after my death? But no,' I would often add, with a sigh, 'I am not good enough for that.' Notwithstanding my high opinion of my virtue and honesty, I could not help feeling that there was something wrong with me. I believed that there was a God who made all things, and I could not deny but that it was right to worship Him and to pray to Him. Sometimes this thought would so haunt me that, in a sort of frenzy, I took to mumbling a hundred *Paternosters* in rapid succession, till I would fall asleep on my pillow. The next morning I would feel ashamed of this, but still, I thought, it could do no harm at any rate.

"Though I had the use of both my eyes in those days, yet I groped about in greater darkness than surrounds me now. But it pleased the Lord to permit a ray of light to pierce the darkness. Owing to his extensive mercantile connections, my master frequently entertained guests from foreign countries. An English family, who were on their way to Malta, came to the house and stayed with us for several days. The lady's maid, a girl of my own age, of the name of Louisa Munro, slept in my room. She spoke French very well, as she had lived for three years in Paris with the family. I observed that she knelt down and prayed

before going to bed, and that she did the same in the morning before leaving her room. What struck me most, however, was her not crossing herself. I wondered what strange religion hers could be. I noticed a little book in which she read a page after her prayer. She left it on the mantelpiece one day, and no sooner had she left the room than I took a glance at it. It was written in English, so I could make nothing of it. But my curiosity was greatly excited, and the next evening, when I saw her again read and pray, I asked her what book it was. She answered that it was a New Testament, and when I appeared not to know what that meant, she explained by saying that it was the Word of God, from which we could learn the way of salvation. Then, unlocking her box, she produced a French copy, and made me a present of it.

“This was my first acquaintance with the Bible. As soon as I found a moment’s leisure, I took to reading a few pages, in which I met with a great many things I did not understand. And no wonder; for I did with this book just as I used to do with the novels: I turned up the last leaves first, to ascertain whether all ended beautifully. So I got quite confused in the visions of the Apocalypse, and becoming tired of them soon, I laid the book aside with a feeling of disappointment. I thought it was a book full of fables, and wondered how such a sensible girl as Louisa could say that it taught us the way of salvation.

“ I often thought of this afterwards. Undoubtedly, the distribution of the Bible cannot be too strongly recommended and promoted, but I believe that, as in every good work, so also in this, zeal should be guided by wisdom. The distribution of the Bible among totally ignorant people should as much as possible be combined with some instructive remarks about the manner in which this book ought to be read, and about its contents. Had Louisa left our house that same day, I believe her having given me the New Testament would have produced an effect upon me quite contrary to what she meant to produce.

“ Fortunately she remained long enough to put me in the right way. She showed me in a kind way that the folly did not lie in the book, but with myself, inasmuch as it was always a foolish thing to read the last pages of a book first. She then gave me a simple but very clear and distinct summary of the life of Christ and the foundation of the first churches, interspersing her tale now and then with a passage from the Gospels or the Acts. I was so deeply interested in all I heard that we continued this conversation till day-break.

“ ‘ We must go to bed,’ she said at last, ‘ and try to get a little bit of sleep for a couple of hours or so. But try to go to sleep with the sweet thought that Jesus loves you, that He died for you, that He desires to save you from your sins and from this wicked world.’

“ All this made a deep impression upon me. Louisa prayed with me the next morning, and entreated me to give myself up as a lost but believing sinner to the only Redeemer. Her words were greatly blessed to my heart. When she left for Malta we parted as sisters in Jesus.

“ We kept up a constant correspondence after her departure. My life with my fellow-servants now became very unpleasant. The more I learnt of the Gospel and the more Christ became precious to me, the more I loathed the worldly-minded, gay, and often blasphemous conversation in the kitchen. I tried to open the eyes of my fellow-servants to the awful consequences to their souls which their way of thinking and living could not fail to have, and to lead them to Christ; but their furious enmity against the word of God soon compelled me to hold my peace. I now became an object of hatred and derision, and at length I resolved to look out for another situation. Louisa wrote me to come to Malta, as she knew a good place for me in an English family who wanted a French cook. No offer could have been more acceptable than this, as it opened up to me the prospect of seeing my good friend again.

“ Alas ! I was too sanguine in my hopes. I never saw her again ; but our joy will be all the greater when we meet in heaven. The ship in which I took passage for Malta was not one of the regular packet-

boats, but a small merchant-vessel, the captain of which was an acquaintance of mine, who offered me a free passage. Bad weather, which continued for two days, and at length increased to a furious tempest, drove us altogether out of our course towards the coast of Barbary. A thousand times I was in despair of my life, and my faith in Christ, which had but so recently sprung up in my heart, was severely tested. By the grace of God it came out only the more strengthened and confirmed. I now knew from experience that Jesus, and Jesus alone, is sufficient to enable one to look death in the face, not only without fear, but with joy.

“No sooner had the storm subsided, and preparations begun to be made to regain our lost course, than we found that we had only escaped one danger to fall into another which was not less fearful. A pirate ship made up to us. The resistance of our crew, gallant as it was, proved in vain. Our captain was killed. With the mate and the sailors, who were most of them wounded, I was transferred to the pirate ship, and the next day I was sold as a slave at a place some twenty miles from Algiers.

“Picture to yourself my condition. If ever it was a great mercy that I knew in whom I believed, it was so now. Had this calamity befallen me a few months earlier, I am assured I should have made away with myself. I now encouraged myself in my God,

who was my *true* Master, since He had bought me with a much more precious price than silver and gold. I knew that my soul was in His hand, and that men would have no greater power over my body than He would allow.

“My master was a wealthy Turk, and a great landed proprietor. He was more humane than I had ever believed a Turkish despot could be. With a gang of slaves I was sent into the fields, and the work which I had to do in the heat of the burning sun was very hard upon me. I was several times beaten, because the overseer thought I was lazy; but when our master, who now and then inspected us, observed my rather delicate constitution, I was transferred to his pleasure-garden. There was nothing but light, and indeed agreeable work, in store for me here. I had to water the flower-beds, to clean the paths, to bind up the shrubs, and to attend the chief gardener's only child, a nice-looking girl about my own age, of the name of Hadschi. She was an intelligent, brisk, lively person, whose dark shining eyes seemed to throw out fire when she was animated. She was very easily irritated, and would often burst out in rage, especially when contradicted, for her imperiousness knew no limits. But she was also easily calmed down by meek submission, and if spoken to in a gentle way, she would always acknowledge her fault. In short, she was a hot-tempered but thoroughly honest creature.

“The Lord enabled me to behave myself so as to gain the affection and confidence of my young mistress. As we lived at a considerable distance from the town, we were seldom visited by strangers. Hadschi had thus no friend, and scarcely enjoyed any conversation. She felt very lonely, and looked eagerly for a heart into which she might pour out her own. At first she took little notice of me, since she could not understand me, nor I her; but gradually I learnt to speak Arabic, which was the general language of the country, and after two years I was able to express myself as fluently in that tongue as in my own. The more I was able to understand Hadschi's thoughts and to communicate mine to her, the greater was the pleasure she took in my company. She was quite delighted to hear me speak about France, the customs and manners of our people, and the strange things which we had invented to make life comfortable. She at length became so attached to me that she asked her father to allow me to be always with her, and so I was raised to the rank of her confidential friend, from whom she had no secret, and from whom she withheld no benefit which it was in her power to bestow.

“Hitherto I had always avoided speaking to her about religious matters. My conscience would often remonstrate with me on account of this; but I lacked courage to broach the subject. I knew that she was

a fanatical Islamite. I had been so fortunate as to keep my New Testament concealed from the eyes of the pirates, and during my trials this precious book was my faithful consoler. Now that I was in comparatively prosperous circumstances, it often became my reprover. When I read such sayings of the Lord as, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him shall I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven,' my heart would tremble within me; but other texts, such as, 'Do not cast your pearls before swine,' or, 'Be wise as serpents,' would again tranquillise my disturbed mind. Still, that tranquillity seldom lasted long. Hadschi often spoke of the Koran, from which she would recite such portions as her religion made it imperative upon her to know by heart. She would also three times a day prostrate herself and exclaim, 'God is great, and Mohammed is his prophet!' I witnessed all this in silence; but a voice within me would whisper: 'Why do you allow that poor erring soul to continue in a way which you know to be a way of perdition? Why do you not maintain the honour of the true Saviour with the same faithfulness with which she exalts the false prophet?'

"These accusations of my conscience many a night robbed me of my sleep. I loved Hadschi indeed. I had never loved any one as I loved her; she was so kind, so tender-hearted to me. She allowed me to read her very heart so freely; and, save the errors

and absurdities of Islam, all I read in that heart was noble, amiable, and true. I was so attached to her that I felt I could have allowed myself to be burned to save her life. Yet—what a strange mixture of contradictions is the human heart!—to save her soul from everlasting perdition I had no courage. Not because I dreaded the serious, perhaps fatal, consequences which my efforts might bring on myself, when it became known that I, an impudent slave, a Christian dog, had tried to make her an apostate to the only true religion; but because I felt almost assured that my attempts would not only be in vain, but render her still more fanatical than she was, deprive me for ever of her friendship, and ruin me for life, without anything being gained by it. Indeed, what I dreaded most of all was the depth of misery into which I should be sure to plunge her loving heart, when, through what she would regard as imprudent proselytism, I should have robbed her of the best and only friend she possessed in this world.

“‘But,’ my conscience would interpose, ‘is it right to love her more than Jesus? Has Jesus not a right to claim her? Is it *true* love towards her that bids you keep her separated from Jesus, when He has perhaps brought you hither for the express purpose that you should lead that lost sheep to the only good Shepherd?’

“ This fearful struggle made me perfectly miserable.

It told upon my health so much that I drooped visibly. My pale cheeks and emaciated form did not escape Hadschi's notice. She anxiously inquired into the cause of it, but I gave her evasive answers. She remonstrated with me on account of my reserve, and sometimes she even besought me with tears to open my heart to her. It was touching to see how she exhausted all her wit to guess the reason of my grief. Was it because I mourned over my absence from my own country and friends? Was it because I regretted the loss of my liberty? Was it because I was separated from a young man to whom she supposed I might be betrothed? She promised me everything that was in her power if I would tell her. Sometimes, too, she burst into anger, and commanded me to divulge the secret. But then, when she saw how she frightened me, she would give way to tears, and fall on my neck and sob.

“At length my conscience became too powerful for me. Now that Hadschi herself besought and bade me tell her what was in my heart, my cowardice and unfaithfulness became the more contemptible in my own eyes. I well remember one sleepless night that I passed. In the morning I came to a firm resolution. I entreated my God to make me faithful, even unto death. Peace then re-entered my long-disturbed soul. I was prepared to drink the bitter cup.

“‘My dearly beloved friend,’ I said to Hadschi,

when the next day she again insisted upon my revealing my secret, 'permit me to tell you a story of what happened in my own country many years ago. Once there was a prince in the land of the Franks who became seriously ill. His physicians were called, and they prepared a draught which he was to take three times a-day. Now the prince had a servant who loved him tenderly; this servant was in possession of a very old book of prescriptions, which a holy man had at one time given to one of his ancestors. The remedies which this wonderful book prescribed against all possible diseases, even those which were deemed incurable, had always and in all cases proved perfectly effective. The servant also knew that the prince's physicians were not well instructed men, that in their ignorance they had mixed poisonous herbs with the ingredients of the compound, and that, consequently, the draughts which they had prescribed for the prince would only make him die a slower and crueller death. On the other hand he knew also that he only needed to prepare the remedy which his book prescribed to cure his beloved master at once, provided that he could be persuaded to take it. Yet, in spite of all this, he did not prepare the remedy, neither did he speak a word about it to the poor patient.'

"Here I stopped.

"'For shame, the traitor!' exclaimed Hadschi. 'I hope they bastinadoed him till he died.'

“‘Don’t be too rash,’ I said. ‘The poor servant was in a fearful state. He knew that the prince put perfect confidence in his physicians, and regarded every one who spoke a word against them as slanderers. At the same time he was almost assured that the prince would not only refuse to take the remedy which he could have prepared, but would suspect him as a poisoner, cast him into prison, and order him to be strangled. Now what was the poor man to do?’

“Hadschi was silent. ‘A dreadful condition,’ she said at last with a sigh. ‘I really don’t know. And what *did* he do?’

“‘He at length overcame his fear,’ I answered, in a serious voice; ‘he spoke out his mind to the prince, come what might. The prince, after some hesitation, believed him: took the remedy, and was cured.’

“‘Glorious!’ exclaimed she, clapping her hands with delight. ‘And what reward did the good man receive? Did the prince make him his chief physician?’

“‘No doubt he would have done so,’ I replied, ‘but——’

“‘But?’

“‘The enraged physicians made a conspiracy, and poisoned both the prince and he who had saved him.’

“‘Horrible!’ exclaimed Hadschi, rising and pacing up and down the verandah in which we were sitting.

‘And is it a *true* story?’ asked she, with child-like curiosity. ‘Has it *really* happened?’

“‘Well, I cannot tell whether it ever *has* happened,’ I answered, with a hesitating voice, ‘but it *may* happen still.’

“‘Oh, it is a riddle!’ cried she, joyfully; ‘let me try to guess it!’—and, the better to concentrate her thoughts upon it, she screened her dark sparkling eyes with her fan.

“‘You will never find it out,’ I said, gently pulling down the fan, and looking her tenderly in the face. ‘Let me at once tell you the application: *I* am that poor servant.’

“‘*You?*’ asked she, with a voice of astonishment. ‘And who is the prince?’

“‘It is *you*, my dear Hadschi.’

“‘But I am not ill,’ replied she.

“‘Not as to the body, thanks be to Allah, but I believe your soul is in great danger. Oh, do forgive my boldness, my own dear friend and mistress, but I am only obeying your own behests, and fulfilling your own entreaties. It is this which has of late made my soul sad, taken the sleep from my eye-lids, undermined my health, and made me miserable day and night.’

“‘For Heaven’s sake what is it?’ cried she, in a voice of fearful emotion. ‘Is there a conspiracy against me? Are there people who will kill me?’

"This turn of thought was not unnatural. Owing to her hot temper she had made many enemies among her slaves, and she knew that some of them hated her.

"‘Don’t be alarmed,’ I said, ‘nothing of the kind is the case as far as I know; I told you that I did not believe your body was in danger, but your soul.’

"‘What then do you mean?’ asked she, resuming her usual calmness. ‘Do speak out your mind, dear Morja.’

"‘Permit me to put one question to you,’ I said, in a grave voice. ‘Are you certain that Mohammed is able to save you?’

"When this question passed my lips, it was as though an electric shock had gone through her frame. An expression of terror fell like a dark veil upon her face; with a shriek, the piercing, terrifying sound of which I shall never forget, she started up from her seat, and running away as quick as her feet could carry her, she fled from me as she would have fled from a serpent.

"I did not see her again that day, nor did I see her for three subsequent days, during which, by her strict orders, I was confined to my room. Nobody in the house marvelled at this. It was a common thing to see her, in a moment of passion, order a slave to be thrown into prison. It was much more a matter for wonder to the household that I had continued so long

without imprisonment, and how it was that I was not cast into the common dungeon, but permitted to remain in my room.

“On the morning of the fourth day I was ordered to come to her divan. She looked sad and severe. I noticed that her eyes were red with weeping.

“‘Morja,’ said she to me, without beckoning me to sit down next to her, as I had been always used to do, ‘do you know that you have forfeited your life by speaking of the Great Prophet to me in the way you did?’

“‘I know.’

“Tears filled her eyes.

“‘How *could* you do such a thing?’ said she. ‘What evil have I done to you that you thus insult me?’

“‘Evil?’ I replied, bursting into tears; ‘evil, my beloved mistress! No evil at all, you never did me anything but good. But you remember my parable? Why did the servant speak to the prince against the draught which his physicians had administered to him?’

“There was a pause.

“‘You consider our prophet a false one?’ she said in a pensive tone. ‘I know the Christian dogs call him the false prophet.’

“‘Permit me to ask you one question.’

“‘Ask, then.’

“‘How do you know he is a true one?’

“‘By Allah! should I not know that? The priests of God, our Imans, have taught us and our fathers from the beginning of the Hegira. And did not the great prophet, blessed be his name! receive the Koran from the hands of the Angel Gabriel himself?’

“‘May I venture again to ask a question, my beloved mistress?’

“‘You may.’

“‘How do you know that your priests are well instructed? Perhaps they are like ignorant physicians who take poisonous herbs for wholesome medicine. As to the Koran, it contains many truths, but also many untruths. If my beloved mistress knew the story of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, she would herself see that Mohammed cannot be God’s prophet, nor make one eternally happy.’

“While I was saying this, I trembled all over, for I expected an outburst of anger such as would crush me. To my great surprise she remained calm, and after a pause, she said:—

“‘What is that story of Jesus Christ? Is it beautiful? Is it a true story?’

“‘It is as beautiful as it is true.’

“She beckoned to me to take my seat next to her, and bade me tell her the story of the Gospel. I began with the birth of our Saviour and the miraculous events by which it was attended. She listened

with the greatest attention. She appeared deeply struck with the unsophisticated simplicity as well as with the divine sublimity of the sacred narrative. She put so many questions to me that we did not proceed farther that morning than the murder of the innocents at Bethlehem. But in the afternoon she sent for me again. She was too anxious to hear the continuation of the story to be able to bear my absence any longer.

“I should weary you were I to give you an account of the conversations which from that day took place between Hadschi and myself about the history of our beloved Saviour. Indeed, we scarcely spoke about anything else from morning till night. The more she became acquainted with the person of Jesus, with the words which He spoke, with the great deeds which He performed, with His unspeakable love and tender mercy towards the lost sinner, with His holy indignation against the hypocrite, the more she became lost in admiration, and the more she desired me to speak of Him. But when I thereupon told her about His crucifixion, His death, and His resurrection, and explained to her *why* He died, showing her that He died for our sins, and also for *her* sins, and that without His blood there was no remission of sins nor salvation possible, a terrible struggle rose in her heart, and she burst into such a violent passion that she again confined me in my room, and refused to see me for many days. I could not think but that all my

hopes concerning her conversion were now gone, and that my doom was sealed. I cast myself at the feet of the Saviour, and prayed for her and for myself, for I now expected nothing short of being soon thrown into prison or strangled.

“Nor was this fear unfounded. I learnt at a later period that the conversation which took place between Hadschi and myself about the Christian religion had been overheard by one of the slaves who hated me, and was envious of the favours which I enjoyed. She reported what she had heard to Hadschi’s father, who sharply examined his daughter upon the matter. Hadschi’s faith in Islam was even at that time much shaken, but she knew that nothing would be in store either for her or for me short of a cruel death if her father should discover even the slightest hint of what was going on in her heart; she therefore told him that she had only entered upon religious topics with me, to convert me to Mohammedanism. Her father doggedly replied that this was not at all her business; that a dozen lashes on the sole of the foot were a far more effective means to convert a Christian dog than a thousand discourses, and that as soon as a priest should make his appearance, he would send him up to me. I need not tell you what would have been my lot if that plan had been carried out. A fanatical Iman leaves to his victim no other alternative but to submit or to die.

“But Providence prevented Hadschi’s father from carrying out his plan. One day, while I was trying to break the deadening monotony of my solitude by humming a hymn in a scarcely audible voice, I heard the report of guns at a distance. I had as early as daybreak observed that an unusual noise and bustle were going on in the grounds. During the morning, however, all had become quiet. I now heard distinctly that a fight was going on. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Suddenly I heard the noise of horses approaching at full speed. They came close to my window, and picture to yourself my transport when the cries: ‘*Vive la France! Vive le Roi!*’ sounded in my ears. My window was only shut in with Venetian blinds. I forced them open, and saw the well-known uniform of our hussars. I stretched out my arms towards them. ‘*Amis!*’ I cried, ‘*au secours!*’ I then swooned.

“I shall not detain you by a detailed description of the great change which now took place in my condition. Our army had taken Algiers, and was engaged in subduing its environs. My master, and Hadschi’s father, with nearly all the male population of the place, were killed in the fight. The females were taken prisoners, and conveyed to Algiers. The captain of the hussars, on learning that I was a French woman whom he had been the means of rescuing from slavery, received me with an expression of joy

which could not have been greater had I been his own child. He placed me in one of my late master's carriages, and had me escorted to the town by a company of hussars. The commander of the town received me kindly, and left it optional to me either to return to Marseilles with one of the Government ships, or to take charge of the female ward of the hospital, where there were many Mohammedan patients. I chose the latter. I need not tell you that my hope to find out Hadschi, and to be a comfort to her in her affliction, contributed not a little to helping me to this decision.

“I had not much trouble in finding her out. She was one of the patients. Her fearful mental struggles during the last few weeks, and the subsequent events, by which she was made at once an orphan and a prisoner, had told too much upon her system. I found her in the delirium of fever. Among the names which she uttered in her wanderings that of Jesus and mine occurred the most frequently.

“I shall not try to express to you the delight with which she recognised me after the crisis had passed. She recovered after a few weeks, and, what is more, she rose from her sick bed to a new life in Jesus Christ her Saviour. I had no difficulty in prevailing upon the governor to appoint her as my assistant in the hospital. Nor could I have desired a better one, for she soon showed a talent for nursing which I have never seen surpassed.

“The three years we spent together at Algiers I shall never forget. The Spirit of God had entirely broken down her former pride, softened her impetuous temper, and made her another Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus. In the midst of infidelity and superstition, we two formed a church by ourselves.

“Then came the sad time of parting. Our efforts, however cautious, to lead our patients to Jesus, excited the suspicion at once of the Roman Catholic and Mohammedan priests. Very likely we should have been dismissed some day, had not the hospital, being only a temporary one, been broken up. I was given to understand that I should please the governor by quitting the colony. This was a hint clear enough to make me resolve to go to Marseilles. Hadschi, though perfectly at liberty to go where she chose, yet resolved to stay in her native country. What would have been the use of her going with me to a country the language of which she could not speak? Besides, she was convinced she could labour better for the Lord among her own people than among us. She joined the troops which were going to fight Abd-el-Kader in the mountains of Morocco. The military surgeon gladly accepted her offer to serve as a nurse in the infirmary. After some years she was the means of converting a young French nobleman, who was a patient under her treatment. He married her, and for her sake settled in Algiers as a private gentle-

man. Here she founded a little hospital for Moham-medans, of which she took the management, her husband paying all the expenses. It is to that good work of hers that the letter refers which Madame Sancourt was so kind as to read to us.

“To return to my own biography. As I had earned a little money at Algiers, I resolved to try to earn my livelihood by keeping an infant school. I hired a small house at Marseilles, in the neighbourhood of the Faubourg de Bayle, and soon had my little school-room filled. In the evening I went out to visit the sick poor people, as I still kept up my fancy for nursing. I stayed many a night at their sick beds, and had the joy of seeing my work blessed for the good of many a poor lost suffering soul. My services in this line seem to have been reported in higher circles; at least, I was soon requested to nurse patients in well-to-do families, who, of course, remunerated me for my services. This enabled me to engage my dear friend and sister in the Lord, Jeannette, to keep the infant school in my stead.”

“Ah,” said Jeannette, with a smile, “but you ought to tell *how* you got me. I was, humanly speaking, a poor, almost dying creature, madame; but for your——”

“Hush, hush!” Marie interposed; “there is no necessity for telling all that here. Suffice it to say that Jeannette kept the school very well, and so I could

go out nursing. But one evening, when on my way to a poor patient, my attention was drawn to a girl who was crying. I learnt that she had fled from a disreputable house, and found herself friendless and penniless in the world. I took her to my house and allowed her to stay with us till a respectable situation should be found for her. Her example, it seems, drew the attention of other girls of the same class. At last, within a few months, I had in my house other four who were selected from a dozen that had applied. While Jeannette taught the infants, I instructed these girls in household work, cooking, &c. One of them, of the name of Henriette Bolermes, was the daughter of respectable parents, who were dead. She had not gone very far in the paths of sin, and she manifested such an honest and faithful character that she soon gained my full confidence. The Gospel, with which she became acquainted in our house, was exceedingly blessed to her heart, so that she became a servant of Christ. She was very clever in all sorts of needle work and in household work generally. To her I entrusted the control and management of the house during my absence, when I was out nursing. My house, however, became too small for this work; but my limited means prevented me from looking out for more ample accommodation. Out of this difficulty I was helped through the liberality of a few ladies. I was enabled to hire a tolerably large house, with a

large garden. While the infant-school was transferred to the garden-house, the girls were located in the main building under Henriette's supervision. Their number soon increased to ten. After having stayed a twelvemonth or so with me, they were placed as servants in respectable families. Some of them also became nurses. In this way our Heavenly Father graciously enabled me to labour for twenty years in His vineyard. At length, however, my nervous system broke down under the work. Gradually I lost my eye-sight. Medical men advised me to withdraw from the cares and the bustle of my beloved establishment, and to settle at a quiet spot in a mountain district. Jeannette, who had also grown old enough to long for a little rest, followed me to this place, which was sought out for us by our dear friend Madame Sancourt. What I feared, however, has happened. Henriette found herself unequal to the work, which was now entirely left to her care. Besides, she married an *employé* at one of the Government offices, who soon after the marriage was transferred to Toulon. In short, the institution was broken up soon after our departure, but I trust that, defective though it was, like all human work, it may not have been altogether in vain in the Lord."

I have seen many enchanting pieces of scenery during my journeys through Switzerland, but not one

of them ever left such a deep and beneficent impression upon my mind as this story of Marie. Every year, when gliding over the beautiful Lake of Geneva, I felt that I must spend a day and refresh myself again with the sight of this truly good woman. And so I did for four years successively. But the fifth year Madame Sancourt took me to the cemetery. There was a grave, and on it was a simple slab with this inscription: "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

“PREACHING TOM.”

WE had an extraordinary piece of work the other week. The floor of our dining-room had become rotten, and the ceiling threatened to fall down upon us some day without giving notice, so that repair was imperative. It was very inconvenient to have workmen in the house, and especially to myself, for my little library, which looks into the garden, adjoins the dining-room, and a part of the partition near the ceiling had to be taken down. It is true, the under part of the wall was high enough to hide me from the workpeople, but all the noise and a deal of the dust had free access into my sanctuary.

Unfortunately I had on hand just at that time a work which admitted of no delay, and constant reference to my book-shelves was absolutely necessary, so that there was nothing left for me but to follow the example of good old Archimedes, who, seated in his parlour at Syracuse, quietly drew a mathematical

problem in the sand that covered the floor, while the Roman soldiers were engaged in pillaging his house.

I soon got pretty well accustomed to the noise of hammer and saw and plane, but what I never could be quite so indifferent to as I wished was the talk of the workpeople. At intervals there would be a short stoppage of work, and then a conversation would take place between the joiners from below and the plasterers from above. During those periods it was of no use for me to try to put together even so much as a single sentence. I was compelled simply to lay down my pen and wait till their worships in the next room were pleased to resume the hammer or the trowel. Sometimes the thought struck me that I might as well step in and ask whether it was their master's intention to charge me in his bill for the time they thus talked away; but as their talk, though on indifferent topics, was yet by no means improper, I resolved to let it go on, remembering that I, too, often paused in the middle of my work to take a breath and refresh myself. We are very prone to forget that due rest is the nerve of labour, and that the reason why so little is done frequently in a day is because too much is done in an hour. This reminds me of my friend Walter Oakley, Esq., who lives in that splendid villa at the foot of the hill, and has all his life done little else than sign cheques and look over his banker's accounts. One day as he sat in his

garden he happened to look at a workman who with a pail was emptying a large tank into a drain. It struck him that the "lazy fellow," as Mr. Oakley termed him in his own mind, was doing the work dreadfully slow, for, by reference to his watch, he found that he poured out only two pails in a minute. Now as my friend Oakley is rather of a hot temper, he walked up to the man and asked him whether he was not ashamed of pouring out only two pails a minute. The man smiled, and said that he could not well do more.

"Well, then, I will show you that more can be done," answered Mr. Oakley with animation; and taking the pail he began working away with such energy, that he poured out about six pails a minute.

"Now, sir," he said, returning the pail triumphantly to the man, "you have learnt a lesson, behave accordingly."

"Please your honour," answered the workman, "would you be kind enough to go on in that way for another couple of minutes."

"Why?"

"Because I never doubted that six pails might be poured out in one minute, but what I am curious to know is, how long you could continue at that rate?"

My friend Oakley had never thought of that. He was somewhat like the woman in the fable who had

a hen that laid a golden egg once every day, and who, to get all the eggs she supposed the animal to contain, took a knife and cut the bird up.

But it is quite true, notwithstanding all this, that if the precious time workpeople waste in talking and loitering were deducted from their bills, we should have our houses much cheaper than they are now-a-days. It is a sad truth, which testifies unfavourably to the morality of the working class of the present day, that there are few among them who seem to feel that to steal a man's time is as much a theft as to steal his purse.

Still there are some good honest fellows who do really perceive and feel this, as I learnt from actual experience when my house was repairing. I was sitting in the library, compelled to listen to the talk that was going on in the dining-room when there was a moment's pause in the work, and I heard one of the workmen say to another:

"Why wasn't you at the —— Gardens, Tom?"

"Because I thought it wasn't right for me to go there," was the reply.

"Pshaw! Is there anything wrong in going out with decent company to spend a few hours in a fine summer evening in a garden?"

"I won't go quite so far as to say that; but what may be right for one man may be wrong for another, and I thought it was not right for *me*."

“Not for you! What in the world can there be wrong in it for you? You are unmarried, have neither chick nor child, plenty of money, plenty of time, and nobody at home to keep you back. Now tell us your reason. I wonder what it is. Listen, ladies and gentlemen!”

“I will tell you with all my heart some other time,” said Tom, “but not now.”

“Why not now?”

“Because this is not a time for talk, but for work.”

“Hear the parson again!” said one of the band, bursting into laughter.

The tools were taken up again and the noise recommenced with its deafening ring. I returned to my books and soon forgot all about the conversation. After about an hour's time there was another pause, and I heard the workmen preparing to go to their dinner. This promised me the pleasure of an hour's perfect quiet; but in this instance I was wrong in my expectations. It appeared that two of the men, Tom and David, stayed to take their dinner at the job. David, I found, was the name of the man who had begun the above-mentioned conversation with Tom.

“Now you will tell me why you wasn't out last night, won't you?” said David.

“I will. First, then, it costs me too much money.”

"But it cannot cost you more than it costs me," said David; "and you earn the same wages as I do."

"Well, you are perfectly at liberty to spend your money as you think proper, but I thought I should not be justified in spending such a pretty bit of mine for such a purpose."

"I cannot see why you should not," said David. "We need a little recreation sometimes. It is as necessary for our health as our meat and drink, and paying a shilling for it is perhaps paying half-a-crown less to the doctor."

"I admit," said Tom, "that recreation is a good thing, and you know that I myself was in the gardens a month ago. But I cannot afford to go so often as you do, and I must seek my recreation in some cheaper way. I often take a walk across the fields, or visit a friend, or read a book."

"Of course all that is very cheap," said David, in a sarcastic tone.

"Why, yes, it is," Tom replied. "But it seems as if you cannot enjoy yourself unless it costs you money. I doubt whether you ever take a walk without calling at some public-house, or have friends at home without sending out your daughter with a pewter-pot. I see her often crossing the street holding something under her apron. Now I don't mean to say that you are given to drinking, but I some-

times cannot help saying to myself, I wonder how David can pay for it all. *I* couldn't, I'm sure."

"But why couldn't you?" asked David rather crossly. "I have to support a wife and four children, and you have nobody to care for."

"I beg your pardon," said Tom. "I have more people to care for than you have. A bachelor is the head of a numerous family. The whole neighbourhood come down upon him because people think he can easily afford it."

"Oh, by-the-bye," said David, "is it true what I heard the other day, that you bought a set of clothes for Bob Wilkins' boy, to get him apprenticed to the plumber?"

"Why, you know the father is a poor fellow, out of employment owing to ill health, and the boy was running idle about the street all day. I asked him why he did not try to learn a trade, and he said he had no clothes, else the plumber would have taken him. Now what was I to do? I thought, suppose I were married, and Bob were my son, shouldn't I buy a coat for him?"

"You're a queer chap, Tom," said David. "Of course it is clear that if you went on in that way you couldn't afford to go to the gardens, though you had all the money in the Bank of England."

"I'm glad I haven't got that," replied Tom. "It would bring a fearful responsibility."

"Responsibility or no, I wish I had only so much as a hundredth part of it," said David.

"Why, I won't say I don't wish it either," said Tom. "We all of us wish to be rich. That's human nature. But many of our wishes are unwise, and that is one of them, at least, so far as I can judge for myself. I find that it gives me plenty of trouble to spend my thirty shillings a-week properly. What would it be if I had to answer for the use I made of say thirty pounds a-week?"

"If you had to answer?" asked David. "What do you mean? Nobody has to answer for the way they spend their money. Isn't it their own property?"

"Well, I don't know. I rather think not."

"What! do you mean to say my wages, which I have earned with my own hands, are not my property?" cried David. "Have I not the right to do with them just what I please?"

"Of course you have, but one day you will have to give an account of what pleased you. It is true, you earn your wages with your own hands, but who gave you the hands to earn them with."

"Ah well, of course, I don't wish to say anything against that."

"I look upon my wages as money which is entrusted to me by God that I may use it for good objects," replied Tom. "It isn't my property, nor

am I myself my own. We are, with all we have, the property of Christ. We are honestly bought and paid for, you know."

Footsteps were now heard, and soon the noise of the workpeople, who had returned from their meals, put an end to this conversation. I could not, however, help feeling interested in Tom; and as I was well acquainted with Mr. Brixton, the builder in whose service he was, I called upon him the next day to obtain some further information about Tom.

"Ay, Tom Perkins!" said Mr. Brixton, with a smile. "He is a singular character. We all know him by the name of 'Preaching Tom.' He is a little methodistical, you know; but for all that he is an uncommon good fellow. He has been in my service these eight years, and I never had a better man either as to work or conduct."

"Does he preach on Sundays?" I asked, thinking that perhaps he might be a local preacher.

"I don't think he does. At least, I never heard of it. His comrades call him 'Preaching Tom,' not because he really preaches, but because he is always giving them some little bit of moral advice. They don't take it amiss though, for he is never harsh. He sometimes gives them rather hard nuts to crack, however. I shall give you an instance. One of my men, of the name of Lewis Harding, abandoned his wife, and was living with another woman, whose

husband was at sea. Tom and Lewis, and a few other workpeople, were at a job in the High Street. Owing to the road having been repaired, there was a heap of stones lying close to the entrance of the place, which the road-men seemed to have forgotten to take away. At all events, the stones were there, and nobody knew why. Now Harding, who happened to be short-sighted, sometimes when in a hurry stumbled on them, and once he hurt himself so much that his elbow bled profusely. Tom, who was near at hand, at once fetched a basin of water, washed the wound, and bandaged it with his handkerchief.

"'Confound those stones!' said Lewis.

"'Hush!' said Tom. 'You may be thankful you have come off so cheaply. If you had lived in Israel under the law of Moses, they would have killed you long since.'

"'Who would have killed me?' asked Lewis.

"'The stones.'

"'Me?'

"'Yes, you. Don't you know that the law of Moses commanded an adulterer to be stoned till he was dead?'

"This observation of Tom's made such an impression upon Lewis that from that moment he never saw the stones without being reminded of the evil of his life. At least, so Lewis told me himself afterwards. 'At last,' he said, 'it was to me as if the whole lot of

them threatened to rise and strike me; and they seemed to haunt me so fearfully, that I returned to my wife to get rid of them.'"

"And do Lewis and his wife live in peace now?" asked I.

"I don't know. I think they do, though she is said to be a very ill-tempered woman, with whom it is rather difficult for a man to live. But if you want to know something more about them, the best thing you can do is to go to Mrs. Burwood, who lives in the same street in which Tom lives. She is an acquaintance of ours, and a good old woman. She will also tell you all you want to know about Tom and his doings."

Having taken down Mrs. Burwood's address, I went to the place and luckily found her in. She was a cheerful old woman, whose open, honest face inspired confidence and respect. As she was by nature talkative, I had little trouble in getting her to tell me all about Tom, who, as I soon learnt, had been her neighbour for several years, and still kept up friendly relations with her. I also found that Mrs. Burwood was a good Christian woman, who, both from her Bible and from experience, had gathered more wisdom than is usually met with among women of her class.

"Oh, Tom is a good child of God," she said. "He is a preacher of the Lord to the Ninevites in this

neighbourhood. But he preaches in his own way: not by sermonising or lecturing people, but by occasionally dropping a word in season, that causes people to think and to consider; and by his own conduct he shows them the better way, and tries to bring them to walk in it. I daresay in passing you noticed a little rag and tool shop at the corner of the street. If you were to enter that place, you would learn how blessed to an unhappy family may be a few words of a good man spoken in love. The inmates are the parents and their large family of nine children. The man was a glazier, and used occasionally to work at the same job with Tom. The woman is not a bad person, but rather frivolous, and has not much skill in household matters. She was willing enough to work, but did not know how to do it to purpose. She had no rule nor order in her labour, and a family so numerous as hers requires a woman who knows what she is about every minute. She was always buried under such mountains of work, that her very spirit was crushed out of her, and in sheer despondency she allowed matters to take their own course. The consequence was, that her house was anything but comfortable—was, indeed, a very Babel of confusion. Add to this the sad circumstance that the eldest boy, a lad of sixteen, was a cripple, who, by aid of his crutches, could move about pretty well in the house, but never even thought of such a thing as

apprenticing himself to a trade. As you will readily conceive, the family was continually in distress, as the husband could not possibly make up by industry for what his wife wasted through neglect. Upon finding his house buried in disorder and filth when he went home from his labour, he would sometimes take refuge in places where he could drown his discontent in the contents of the bottle. Now this sad state of things was well known throughout the neighbourhood, and had not escaped Tom's notice, and he often wished he could do something for these unhappy people. But as he was only slightly acquainted with them, he found no opportunity for this. One day, however, he happened to meet James (that was his name) at a job on the fifth storey of a very high warehouse. During a short pause they seated themselves in a window, from which they had a wide view over the houses of this densely-populated district.

“ ‘ If we could get the history of all the families who live in these houses written down,’ observed Tom, ‘ what a strange book it would be !’

“ ‘ I have no doubt it would,’ said James.

“ ‘ And what often strikes me,’ Tom continued, ‘ is the thought of the awful sight it will be when all the heads of those families will stand before the great Judge to give an account of the way in which they have behaved to their wives and brought up their

children. I am afraid not many of them think of that great responsibility.'

" 'Perhaps not,' James replied. 'Many haven't got time to think of it. I for one, at least, am only too glad if so much time is left as to allow me to think how to keep the wolf from the door. I have a large family, you know.'

" 'I know you have,' said Tom. 'I suppose your good wife must have a very great deal to do to keep matters right during the day?'

" James smiled rather sarcastically, and soon had read as many pages out of the book of his domestic life as enabled Tom to see where the root of the evil lay.

" 'I cordially sympathise with you,' he said to James. 'But permit me to ask you one question: Do you believe that your wife and children were given you by God?'

" 'I do.'

" 'And do you believe that God can be pleased with the state of things you have described?'

" 'Perhaps not,' James answered, doggedly. 'But what can I do?'

" 'I think you might try to do something. Your house is far too full for your wife to manage well in it. You should thin the population. Your two eldest daughters, for instance, could you not let them go into good places as servants?'

“ ‘ I have sometimes thought of that,’ James answered ; ‘ but to tell the truth, I know nobody to send them to ; and—they have no clothes.’ ”

“ That same evening Tom called upon me, and we soon arranged the matter. I promised to find situations for the girls, and Tom provided them with clothes. Before a month had elapsed, they were in good places.

“ Tom was now, of course, introduced into James’s family. He saw that four of the children were of such ages that they should have been at school long since.

“ ‘ I think,’ he said to cripple Dick, ‘ you might try to earn the money to pay for the schooling of these four.’ ”

“ ‘ Me !’ cried Dick, laughing loudly. ‘ You might as well expect me to dance a quadrille.’ ”

“ Dick was a very good-natured lad, and was really clever in the head. Though lame, he was sharper than many who strut along like peacocks.

“ ‘ I’ll tell you how you could do it,’ said Tom. ‘ I happened to need a file and went to old Allen Bowen’s rag and tool shop over there at the corner. He told me that he was much in need of an honest fellow who could take care of his shop while he was away on business, for that his servant had run away with the contents of the till. I thought now that would be something for you.’ ”

" ' Ay,' said Dick. ' He would not need to fear my running away with the till, at any rate. He'd soon overtake me.'

" In short, a few days after this Dick found himself behind Allen Bowen's counter at fifteen shillings a week and his dinner free. Every week he faithfully gave up as much as was required to pay for the children's teaching. After the lapse of three years, Allen Bowen, desiring to retire, advised Dick to carry on the business along with his father, who would be able to do the out-door work. Being fond of Dick, he sold him the shop on very moderate and reasonable terms. The family thereupon removed into the corner house, and have been thriving beautifully ever since. Tom's conversation was especially blessed to the heart of the poor cripple, who has never ceased to look upon him as his best friend, and the main cause of his improved circumstances. So far as I am able to judge, Dick is a genuine Christian. He keeps the whole household under the discipline of the Gospel, to which James and his wife do not refuse to submit. It is now as much a pleasure to spend an evening in that family as formerly it would have been a punishment."

" Very wonderful," I said.

" Isn't it ?" said Mrs. Burwood. " And he does it all so cheerfully, sometimes even in such an amusing way, that one cannot help smiling even while admiring the noble spirit of the man. He seems to

sympathise especially with halt, lame, and cripple people. Last year he made out a list of all the poor cripples he could find in the neighbourhood. There were about a dozen of them. He purposed to give them a happy day this summer, and set about collecting among his friends; and when the plan was once known, others began to collect for it. Dick gave a sovereign. Then on a beautiful day last month a large cart called early in the morning at the various houses of the cripples. There were plenty of hands to carry them down the stairs and lift them into the cart. It was a day of general merriment. Then the party drove to the —— Gardens, where a large crowd of friends and well-wishers assembled. I believe I am safe in saying that half the population of the neighbourhood ran out to the gardens, notwithstanding that the price of admission was a shilling a head, which went to the benefit of the cripples. They had a good dinner and tea, and were wheeled about through the gardens all day, every one being eager for the honour of wheeling a cripple for half an hour. You may imagine the wonder and delight of these poor people, when they saw so many happy faces round them, and the springing fountains, and the sports and pastimes of the young people on the lawns. The amount collected at the gate was placed in the hands of a committee as a fund for the benefit of the cripples during the approaching winter.”

"Oh," I said, "I see it now; it was that to which Tom alluded when he said to David that he had been at the gardens a month ago. He must be a great favourite with the people of this place."

"Well, he is liked by many, but still, you see, there are some who owe him a grudge. His remarks sometimes fall like good seed into a bad soil, and then they produce thistles which threaten to prick him. There is Mr. Lang, the teacher, for instance, who keeps a school a few yards to the left of the Mechanics' Institution Rooms. He picked a quarrel with Tom, which caused him much annoyance. It came about in this way:—

"One day Mr. Lang sent for Tom to repair a broken desk in his schoolroom. While Tom was working at the desk, Mr. Lang was standing at the window looking into his garden. He saw a boy doing something that greatly displeased him, for he stamped on the floor, and said, 'Hang that boy!'

"'Sir!' said Tom.

"'Never mind,' was the answer.

"'I'm glad of that,' said Tom.

"'Eh? What are you glad of?'

"'Of your not going to hang that boy.'

"Mr. Lang smiled.

"'Why,' he said, turning to Tom, 'he would have deserved it, the good-for-nothing scoundrel. He trampled upon one of my finest flowers.'

“ ‘ If every one who deserves to be hanged were hanged, I believe not a living man would be left on the earth,’ said Tom.

“ ‘ That’s strong language,’ said Mr. Lang. ‘ And how can you prove it ?’

“ ‘ Why, sir, it is quite plain, so far as I can see. We are saved by One, who, in our stead, hung upon a cross, so it follows that we ought to have hung there.’

“ ‘ Speak for yourself,’ Mr. Lang replied sharply. ‘ I am not aware I have behaved so badly as to have deserved the gallows.’

“ ‘ Nor have I,’ said Tom, ‘ if there be no higher tribunal than that of man. But I believe there is a higher one, and that you as well as myself will one day have to stand before it, and to give account of every *word* which we have spoken.’

“ ‘ Ah, well,’ Mr. Lang replied, now dropping his jesting tone and returning to sober earnest, ‘ I trust matters will not prove so bad as you seem to expect. I always say to the children : Do your duty ; give every one what you owe him, fear God, and love your neighbour, and you will be happy both here and hereafter.’

“ ‘ That’s a good religion for people who always do their duty and never sin,’ said Tom, ‘ but unfortunately I am not one of them. I find that I have often neglected my duty and sinned against God, and so I am in need of a Saviour who died for my sins.’

“ ‘ Well, of course, I too have my faults and defects, as every human being has,’ Mr. Lang answered ; ‘ but the Almighty will overlook them if we try to do the best we can.’

“ ‘ Suppose that is true, sir, Tom replied, ‘ still even such a religion would not meet *my* case, for I find that I seldom or never have done the best I could. I find that every day I am adding to the debt which stands against me in the great book of the eternal Judge, and I see that I shall never be able to pay it off. So I take refuge in a Saviour who paid it for me by His blood. My works, even though they were a thousand times better than they are, will never be sufficient to cover that enormous deficit. I am certain that if I were so reckless as to bring them forward on the great day of judgment, as a make-up for my sins, the anger of God would burn them up, and me along with them.’

“ ‘ What a horrible doctrine !’ Mr. Lang exclaimed, in an angry tone. ‘ You make a bloodthirsty tyrant of our gracious Father in heaven.’

“ ‘ I cannot see how the title of a bloodthirsty tyrant can be applicable to Him who, to spare *our* blood, shed His own,’ Tom observed calmly. ‘ I believe even the youngest child in your school will be able to perceive that no man can have greater love than He who has laid down His life for His enemies.’

“ ‘ I shall take care never to teach that cruel doc-

trine to my children,' cried Mr. Lang. 'I will tell them to do their duty. That will make better members of society of them than your fanatical theology can ever do.' "

" Here Tom, on noticing that Mr. Lang was getting angry, held his peace. Mr. Lang paced up and down the schoolroom, muttering many words which Tom, who resumed and went on with his work, could not understand. At length Mr. Lang, turning to him again, said :

" ' Are you married ?'

" ' I am not, sir.'

" ' If you had children, would you send them to my school ?'

" Tom paused a moment to think.

" ' Before answering that question,' he said, ' permit me to put another to you. Look you here, sir, this is a hole of seven inches square, which you want me to fill up with a piece of wood. Suppose you saw me cut off a piece of four inches square and try to fill up the hole with it, would you send your son to me to be taught joinery ?'

" ' Certainly not,' Mr. Lang answered. ' But what has that to do with *my* question ?'

" ' Why, sir, it appears to me that a man who tries to cover his sins by his own works is like a joiner who tries to fill up a seven-inch hole with a four-inch board.'

"Mr. Lang made no reply, and Tom, after having finished his work, departed. Since that day, Mr. Lang has been an enemy to Tom, and has not hesitated to speak of him occasionally to the children in a disparaging way. This has caused Tom to be called by various nicknames among the lower class. He has not, however, been molested by any of them as yet, for I believe a certain instinctive respect keeps them in restraint. They *feel* that he is better than the best of them."

* * * * *

The opening in the wall of my library is filled up again, the workpeople have left the dining-room, and a perfect quiet reigns in my snug little study. But sometimes still, when I pause for a moment from my work, I look up to the ceiling and wish the opening were there again, provided I could hear through it the voice of "Preaching Tom."

AN UNPROFITABLE SUNDAY.

“ I THINK you should come with me to Rosemount, to see my old friend, Mrs. Tulloch.”

These words were spoken by Mr. Overdale, who sits at the desk opposite to me. We had been taking breath for a moment, and I happened to say that I should much like to spend the next Sunday in the country somewhere, as the weather was so fine.

“ Where is Rosemount ? ” I asked.

“ Why, it is a little hamlet—one can hardly call it a village—three or four miles to the south-east, an exceedingly pleasant spot among the hills. Out there one can almost fancy one’s-self transported to the days of the patriarchs, among the herds and the flocks; only, to be sure, there are no tents. Instead there are many pretty villas, built on the slope of the hill. But I must tell you that you need to be a little bit of a pedestrian to go there, for there is no rail to it, and

the omnibus does not run on Sunday. But the road is really beautiful, and I am sure you will enjoy the walk."

"Well, I shouldn't mind going," I answered, "if I would not be intruding upon your friend."

"Oh, Mrs. Tulloch will be delighted to see you. She is really a very nice old woman, and hospitality itself. She does not see many people, however, Rosemount being such an out-of-the-way place, and she is not able to move about now, poor woman, and is constantly confined to the house. That's the reason why I go there so often on Sunday, just to let her know that she is not yet quite alone and forgotten in the world."

The arrangements having been completed, we started immediately after breakfast next Sunday morning. You must know, however, this was not till half-past nine, for my Sunday breakfast, though not so substantial as my week-day one, lasts longer, to let me once in a time enjoy the rare luxury of drinking my hot tea without blowing and puffing. I thought there was no reason for starting earlier, as we could easily walk the distance in an hour and a-half, and would thus be in time for service, which, as I supposed, commenced at eleven o'clock at Rosemount, as well as everywhere else. Nor did Mr. Overdale grumble on account of my being rather late. On the contrary, I found him just finishing his last

piece of toast, and patiently waiting till I should make my appearance.

The road was very beautiful ; just such a road as one would wish for a quiet, hallowed Sunday's walk. Winding up the side of a hill, and then down into a valley, and up a hill again, it soon took us away from the crowded town, which even on Sunday is noisy and bustling. We did not notice a single living creature on the way, except the birds, which sang their morning hymn to the praise of their Creator in their lofty and green-decorated music hall, and the cattle, which, peacefully browsing on the slopes of the hills, seemed to preach an eloquent sermon from the text : " The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." The scenery around, clad as everything was in its luxuriant summer attire, and reposing in the quiet of a lovely Sabbath morning, had a particularly hallowing effect upon my mind. It was a striking illustration of what is meant by the word " peace." No harsh sound grated upon our ears, no rough winds buffeted us on our way, no waste fields or decayed houses offended the eye ; all was perfect harmony, and through it all love seemed to breathe the keynote. I felt that nothing could better prepare me for the worship of God than an hour like this spent in the temple of nature, and I could not help saying

to my friend that I wished I could every Sunday take my way to the house of prayer through this court of creation.

"In that case I should advise you not to take this road," Mr. Overdale answered, "for you will find no church at Rosemount."

"Why? Isn't there a church there?" I asked in amazement.

"There is neither church nor chapel, my dear sir, nor is there any within six miles, except the churches in our own town."

"How is that? Aren't there sinners to be saved, and saints to be edified?"

"Plenty of sinners; I am afraid far more than of saints. But the place has only within the last ten years extended from half a dozen miserable peasant's cottages to the cluster of well-built houses surrounded by villas we see it now. Efforts are being made, I understand, to get a chapel-of-ease built, but the incumbent of the parish seems to manifest anything but enthusiasm for the plan."

I felt disappointed. I could now understand why my friend had been taking it so easy, for we had crept up and down the hills rather than walked, and to my surprise, on looking at my watch, I found that it was a quarter-past eleven when we came in sight of the place.

No sooner had we entered what might be called a

street in embryo, which ran between two short rows of recently built shop-houses, than we were met by a dozen children, boys and girls of from six to fourteen, indulging in lively sports with as much noise as their uncontrolled spirit of playfulness admitted. Two of them were sending up a kite, four were throwing balls, and the rest were playing marbles. I noticed a big boy, apparently about fifteen, sitting upon a piece of timber, reading a book. Having glanced over his shoulder, I found it was one of the railway novel collection.

"Do you like that book?" I took leave to ask, gently tapping him on the shoulder.

"Yes I do, sir," was the short answer.

"It is a novel, isn't it?"

"It is, sir."

"Do you think it is right to read such a book on the Lord's Day?" I asked, in as kind a tone as I could command.

The boy looked at me with an expression of wonder, not unmixed with crossness. Then turning his eyes upon the book again, he continued his reading, without giving me an answer. I put a few other questions to him, but in vain. My question had rendered him dumb as the grave.

"I believe," Mr. Overdale said to me, "the people of this place like their Sunday license so well, that to touch it would be very much the same as touching

the apple of the eye. The poor boy apparently has never known such a thing as a Christian Sunday. I wonder whether he ever went to church."

My attention was then drawn to a servant girl, who, with a basket from which a leg of mutton was protruding, came out of a butcher's shop, which was open just as it would be on a common week-day.

"It seems there are no police here either," I observed.

"Why, what would be the use of police in this matter?" Mr. Overdale replied. "The policeman might compel the butcher to put up his shutters, but he could not prevent him from selling his meat. The people would still know very well where to get their joints and chops on Sunday."

While Mr. Overdale said these words, the butcher, in his shirt sleeves and with a long white apron down to his ankles, came out to the door.

"Fine day this, gentlemen," he said, in a kind tone, as though we had known each other for years.

"Beautiful," I answered. "I am surprised to see you shut up in your house. It is such a luxury to take a walk in the country."

"Oh, it is ; but you see I can't get away from my shop till noon. People sleep so dreadfully long on the Sunday morning, and come so late to make their purchases."

“What is the general hour for rising here on Sunday morning?” I asked sarcastically. “Ten?”

“Well, I think that’s about it. And then it takes till eleven, sometimes till twelve, to get breakfast. It is a bore and bother to us shopkeepers. But it can’t be helped. It is public opinion, sir, and nobody need go against that.”

“Well, but it is unlawful,” I observed. “It is against human as well as divine law to buy and sell on Sunday, isn’t it?”

“Well, it is; but you see, where everybody breaks the law, it is impossible for one man to keep it.”

“But don’t the police interfere?” Mr. Overdale asked.

The butcher smiled and passed his hand across his full-moon face.

“Ah, the police,” he replied. “I suppose you don’t know what the police in the country means. A policeman is just the humble servant of the ladies and gentlemen who are the great people of the place. Take, for instance, Mr. Price, who lives in that splendid villa you see up yonder on the top of the hill. Why, he is the first magistrate in the district; but alert as he is during the week, he is lazy on Sundays. He sleeps awfully long. I don’t believe he and his family rise before noon. Then friends often come unexpectedly on a visit, and on a sudden a joint is wanted, or some steaks, or a dozen or so of

cutlets. Now you see, while the mistress orders the servant to run down to me as quick as she can, the master can't very well order the policeman to see to my shop being shut, that not even so much as a sausage be carried out of it. That wouldn't do at all, sir: and least of all on the part of a magistrate."

The talkative butcher laughed heartily after this discharge of his humour.

"And it's the same," he continued, "with all the great folks who live up the hill. We must all wait upon their orders—the grocer, the baker, the dairyman, and myself."

"But couldn't you shopkeepers agree together not to sell on Sundays?" I asked. "Suppose your shops were shut, what could the 'great folks,' as you call them, do against it?"

"Oh!" the butcher answered, assuming an expression of mock horror. "Oh, sir, that's conspiracy! We dare not attempt it, sir. You see, we have settled down here relying upon the favour of the ladies and gentlemen. We have built our houses on that understanding, and we could not exist but for their good will. Now you see, if we were to wage war with them on Sunday, they would conspire to make mincemeat of us, which of course would cause them a little inconvenience; but they might easily manage by some arrangement to get their provisions from town."

"Dear me, what a state of things this is," I said to Mr. Overdale as we were proceeding along; "we have surely got into heathendom."

"It is simply owing to the fact of there being no place of worship here," was the answer. A Sunday without a church is like a house without inhabitants. It decays and goes to waste more and more, till at length it collapses into mere dust and rubbish."

We passed the grocer's. A good-looking woman, evidently the mistress of the house, was just directing her boy, who, with a large, well-filled bag on his back, was about to start off towards the hill."

"Rather a heavy burden for one to carry on the Day of Rest, ma'am," Mr. Overdale said to her, in a kind, compassionate voice.

"Well, sir, it is, rather," she answered in the same tone, "and more especially as he has to carry it up to the very top of the hill. On week-days he takes it up on horse-back; but on Sundays the quantities are not nearly so large, and there being but a few houses to call at, it is scarcely worth while to take the horse out of the field. And besides, the animal really needs the rest of one day out of seven, for it has to trot up and down the hills all the other days in the week. So we drive it away into the meadow on Saturday evening, and leave it there till Monday morning."

"I should almost say you deal more mercifully with your horse than with your boy," I observed, trying to assume as kind a smile as the muscles of my face were capable of forming. It cost me some difficulty though, for I thought the subject anything but one to smile at. Fortunately it had the desired effect, for she took the thing quite good humouredly, and said:

"Ah, well, sir, there is some truth in that; but the boy is specially paid for it, you see; and money sweetens work, as the proverb says."

"But do you believe it is right to induce a servant to work for money on the Lord's Day?" I asked.

A stern expression at once passed over the woman's face, and I expected nothing short of an outburst of anger. But I was mistaken. It was not the expression of resentment, but of a stricken conscience.

"Well, I don't think it is right," she answered, "and I often speak about it to my husband; for I wasn't brought up in this sort of way, sir. My parents were respectable people, who went regularly to church twice every Sunday, and would not for all the silver and gold in the world have broken the Lord's Day. Nor is my good husband one of those folks who don't care about religion. He would be only too glad if we could shut the shop on Sunday, as respectable tradesmen do elsewhere. But it cannot be done. The people here about will have the shops

"You see," I said to Mr. Overdale, while we continued our walk, "this is the day for making calls in the neighbourhood. I have no doubt many a sumptuous and merry dinner-party is given here on Sundays."

As Mrs. Tulloch lived a good bit up the hill, and as our way now began to ascend, we stepped on slowly. We were overtaken by a gentleman, who, from his light summer dress and broad-brimmed straw hat, appeared to be one of the inhabitants. While walking on by his side we had no difficulty in entering into conversation with him, which having been commenced by remarking on the fineness of the weather, soon turned upon the charms of the scenery and the pretty situation of the place.

"I suppose you reside here," I said.

"I do. That white house you see on the hill peeping out between the large beeches is mine."

As he spoke, he pointed to a villa which, as far as I could judge from a distance, seemed very pretty, and must have commanded a splendid view down the valley.

"Is this the first time you have been here?" he asked.

"It is; and to tell you the truth, I am amazed to find that you make so little difference here between a week-day and a Sunday."

"You are right," he answered, with a smile. "We

are quite children of nature here. To us all the days that Heaven allows are alike. Since we have no church of brick and mortar, we worship the Creator in the great temple He himself has made. And since nobody comes to call us together to worship him on any special day, we worship him every day. Or perhaps," he added, with a sarcastic smile—"perhaps we don't worship Him at all. The —— knows."

"I am very much afraid the latter explanation is the correct one," I answered. "As far as I could ascertain from the people in the village, this seems to be a day for selling and buying,—for working and toiling at the bottom of the hill, and for sleeping, eating, drinking, and walking on the top."

"Just so," he answered, in a gay tone; "and when those who are now labouring and toiling will have earned enough to build for themselves houses on the top, others will come in to work for them at the bottom. And thus matters will go on to the end."

"You seem to think very lightly of it," I said, "but I am afraid that those who are now living on the top will find it a serious matter to answer certain questions which will one day be put to them by a Judge whose throne is higher than all the hills. For they not only desecrate the Lord's Day themselves, but induce the people at the bottom to do the same."

"Oh, I know what you mean!" he exclaimed, lightly. "You want us to sleep a little shorter time,

to eat a little less, to keep at home a little more, to see nobody, and to read no books. But, my dear sir, how in all the world could we get through the day then? We are not made of pipe-clay, so as to be able to sit down on the same spot from sunrise to sunset reading the Bible."

"Of course not. But since, as you yourself observed, the people on the top are so well off that they need not work on Sunday like those at the bottom, I wonder they have not thought of building a place of worship, and providing a clergyman to minister to them in health and sickness. I have no doubt but that the people at the bottom would be glad to help in this, provided it would return to them the day of rest which they surely have a right to."

"Well, I won't say but that that would be a good thing," he answered, in a less jesting tone than he had used before; "but the man has not yet been found to make the start. But as you seem to take an interest in the matter, you might try it; and if you do provide us with a nice church and a good preacher, you may be sure of finding me there regularly every Sunday."

As he said these words we arrived at a road which turned off to the left, and evidently led up to his house.

"Very well," I replied, "I keep you to your word. But will you also contribute?"

“I will. Good-day to you.”

We continued our road, and soon reached Mrs. Tulloch's gate. The servant who opened it was very glad to see Mr. Overdale, whom she knew as a friend of her mistress. She told us that Mrs. Tulloch had had a presentiment this morning that Mr. Overdale would come, but when it grew so late she had given up hope, but she would only be all the more agreeably surprised now.

“That comes of your long conversations with the people at the bottom of the hill,” Mr. Overdale said to me, pushing my elbow. “But,” he added, “who can tell what good may result from them?”

Good old Mrs. Tulloch, a genuine specimen of pure, unmixed Scotch character, received us with enthusiasm, just as though we had been her children. As she was unable to leave her seat, she ordered Peggie, her amanuensis and *factotum*, to do everything in her power to make us comfortable. It was her custom to have only a cold dinner on Sunday, which might be served up at any moment; and as she supposed we were a little tired, she would at once help us to recover ourselves by what her larder afforded.

To this Mr. Overdale said that, so far as regarded himself—and he had no doubt that I agreed with him—there was no necessity for making any hurry about dinner, since we had breakfasted rather late,

and taken our walk very leisurely. So he suggested that we should spend an hour or so in religious exercises, which he supposed would be welcome to us all, since we had no opportunity of going to church. Mrs. Tulloch's face, and Peggie's also, brightened up at this proposal, and the latter at once stepped to a bookcase which was in the corner of the room. From it she produced Bibles and hymn-books and a volume of sermons. The service, which was conducted by Mr. Overdale, secured us a really blessed hour, which was all the more enjoyed by me, as I had given up hope of engaging in anything of the kind on this "unprofitable Sunday."

While we sat at dinner, Mrs. Tulloch told us all we desired to know about the place. "There was," she believed, "no spot in the world which was more worldly-minded than this. Not that it was exactly what is called an immoral place. On the contrary, an appearance of respectability was kept up in everything. But behind this decorous screen the god of this world was constantly worshipped. The greater portion of the inhabitants consisted of rather wealthy people. She believed more money was spent on dinner and dancing parties in this little place than in any town in the neighbourhood; and on Sundays the number of guests and visitors that came swarming to it was something astonishing. Hitherto, as she had already observed, everything was kept within the

limits of what the world calls decency; but she much feared that, if matters continued much longer as they were, the boundary would be overstepped. There was no public school, and the children, especially of the artisans and tradespeople, were growing up in a thoroughly bad spirit, and would be sure to come to excesses from which their parents were preserved. She had no doubt a home missionary might do an immense deal of good here by visiting the families and by holding a Scripture-reading meeting once or twice a week, though it might be difficult for him to find a suitable room. But even if he should succeed in this, he would, in her opinion, not be able to take the evil by the root, for it did not so much lie with the middle and lower classes as with the rich people on the hill; and these, of course, would not be accessible to him. The one thing which was needed above all others was a church, with a good, faithful, zealous clergyman. She was quite assured, too, that such a man would be warmly welcomed even by the greater portion of the wealthy people, for most of them—and she knew it for certain—secretly disliked the present state of things. They could do little towards improving them, however, as long as there was no public worship on the Sundays, and so long as there was not a man who from his position in society was entitled to act the part of a reformer. She had often prayed to God to send such a man to the place, that

through him a church might be formed; but as she had little influence and was compelled to keep at home, she was not able to do anything more than pray. But if contributions were desired, she would be most happy to give her mite, and would also try to obtain help from friends with whom she was in correspondence."

When returning home after tea, we conversed about the spiritual wants of Rosemount, and we pledged ourselves to leave no stone unturned till, with God's help, we had provided that truly poor place with the best of all treasures—the Gospel of the grace of God.

It would take me too long to tell how we were enabled to give the matter a start. Suffice it to say that after a great deal of canvassing in town and holding of meetings with clergymen and influential Christians, and printing of circulars, we at length got so far as to be able to commence receiving contributions. It was deemed proper that the place itself should be visited first. So, one afternoon Mr. Overdale and myself drove to Rosemount and went straight up to the house of the gentleman we had met on the road, who had promised to give us a contribution. Mrs. Tulloch, from the description we had given her, had told us that his name was Mr. Milford, and that he was one of the wealthiest inhabitants.

"Now, sir, we come to remind you of your kind promise," I said to him.

"I beg your pardon—I daresay I have seen you before—but I really do not quite recollect——"

I helped him by a hint or two, and soon he remembered the conversation during our walk up the hill.

"Oh, to be sure," he exclaimed, merrily. "Well, what is to be done?"

I told him of our proceedings, and showed him our circulars.

"Excellent," he said. "And where is your list?"

I handed him the paper.

"What! Am I to sign first?"

"Of course, you were the first to promise."

"You have caught me there," he answered, cheerfully; and taking a pen, put down his name for £500. Then taking a slip of paper, he made out a list of those most likely to give, and directed us where to go next.

Before twelve months elapsed Rosemount had a church, and an excellent pastor. And if henceforth you visit that place on Sunday you will find all the shops closed, and the stable-yard of the public-house almost empty.

"That 'unprofitable Sunday,'" Mr. Overdale one day said to me, "was, after all, perhaps the most profitable in our life."

THE OCCUPATIONS OF A CRIPPLE GIRL IN A BACK STREET.

WITH the exception of the blind, I believe there is not a single man or woman in Glasgow who has not seen a sparrow. Nor do I believe there is one individual in it who does not know that he is of more value than many sparrows. But whether they, on seeing a sparrow, realise that the fact of their being of more value than it is a ground for them "not to fear," is a question which I am not prepared to answer. Yet that is not only a truth, but a glorious truth, to those who can see things through the eye of faith. To the eye of the natural man, a sparrow, when struck by a stone, seems to fall to the ground through mere accident, and, on witnessing it, he is prone to think that he himself may one day fall through some similar cause—that he is, in fact, every moment liable to be hurt or killed by accident. But the man who has learnt to

look at things through faith, when he sees a sparrow fall, knows that this does not happen without the knowledge and will of his Heavenly Father, who can never be other than wise and good; and drawing his conclusion from the fact that he is of more value than many sparrows, he knows that, if he should also happen to fall to the ground one day, it must be for wise and good reasons. And this conviction, of course, is to him a perfectly sufficient ground not to fear but to feel at peace, hoping in his God even in the midst of this world, so full of what are called "accidents."

I have said that I could not tell whether there are many people in Glasgow who, through faith, know this truth; but of this I am certain, that Maggie Brewster, who lived in a back street near the Tron-gate some years ago, did not know it. One morning, in passing along the side of the mill, she fell through a trap-door into a cellar, and broke her leg. It was a "shocking accident," as everybody said, "and was entirely owing to the stupidity of Allan Macpherson, who had forgotten to fasten the bolt." And so cried poor Maggie herself as she was being conveyed to the hospital, moaning with pain. She suffered a great deal, poor thing, and though her life was saved, she became a cripple, and was unfit for work. As she had always been an honest and industrious girl, and owed her misfortune to the negligence of

one of the servants of the firm, she was allowed a pension, which enabled her to support herself and her aged mother as she had done before.

So Maggie returned home to go to the mill no more, but to rest and repose all her life long. She soon got accustomed to her crutch, and could keep her mother company day and night; and indeed her mother would often say to her that she should not, after all, owe a grudge to Allan, but rather thank him for having procured her such a happy and easy life. But Maggie would answer that, though she did not owe Allan a grudge, and had forgiven him long since, yet she could not thank him either, for she would much rather skip along to the mill like a bird than go halt through life like a wounded hare; that life had become rather tedious to her, as she had always been accustomed to be busy through the day, and that she wished very much for something to fill up the long dreary hours. It is true, that being a clever seamstress, she would often sew for friends or neighbours, but as she scarcely knew what to do with the money thus earned, and which was accumulating every month in the savings' bank, she took very little interest in this work, which besides was rather dull and monotonous for her taste. At least, she was under no pressure to do it, and would often, in fine weather, throw needle and thread into a corner, and hobble out to the door, where she would stand

leaning on her crutch, looking at the people in the street, or observing the sparrows picking up crumbs of bread, without, however, understanding the important lesson which she might have learned from those little creatures.

Now it happened one day, that when she was thus standing in the doorway, a man, whom she knew by sight as a frequent visitor of the neighbourhood, approached her with a kind expression of face, and asked whether she had ever heard of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate. Maggie answered that she had not, but that she would go and ask her mother about him, for that she was much better acquainted with this quarter, and knew almost all the people in it, both young and old. The man looked at her with a smile, saying that she need not take that trouble, as he was almost certain her mother did not know the person, for if she did, she would have been sure to have told her about him. The stranger added that he had not put his question to ascertain from her the man's address, since he had been long dead, and was most likely in heaven, but he thought that as his story was very remarkable, she might perhaps like to know it, and he would be glad to sell her a little book, from which she would learn all about it. Thereupon he produced, from a bag which he was carrying on his shoulder, a little volume with a yellow cover. Maggie thought that it must be a nice story that was

contained in such a pretty-looking book, and that she might as well spend a penny upon it, the more so as, after having turned over some of the leaves, she noticed that it was printed in clear type, much clearer, at any rate, than were the songs which she would sometimes buy from the singing beggars. Having paid the man, she at once returned to the room, and sat down to read the little book to herself and her mother. They learnt with great pleasure the story of the lame man who sat at the gate of the temple at Jerusalem, and was cured by Peter in the name of Jesus Christ. They enjoyed it all the more, of course, that it was quite new to them, and though they could not exactly tell where Jerusalem was, nor who Peter and John were, yet from hearsay they knew this much, that Jesus Christ was "our blessed Lord and Saviour." But what struck Maggie most was an observation which she read in the little book—"that God sometimes allowed people to become cripples just in order to prevent them from running fast to hell, and to bring them on the way to heaven, to which a cripple, through faith in Jesus Christ, may run as quickly as one possessed of the soundest legs; for it is possible that the poor lame man at Jerusalem, supposing he had been born with strong limbs, might have walked through this world without caring about Christ and his salvation, whereas his crippled state, while it prevented him from running

far into sin, kept in his mind a feeling of need and dependence upon God which made him fit for receiving help from Christ, and thus bringing him to the knowledge and the love of his Saviour." These words often recurred to Maggie, and it would sometimes strike her that perhaps there might have been some similar reason why God had allowed her to fall down the trap-door, for though it had happened through Allan Macpherson's fault, yet she felt that God must have allowed it, else it could not have happened at all.

Some days later she was standing in the doorway, when, much to her surprise, she saw the man with the bag coming up to her again. She told him with a smile that if he now questioned her about the cripple at the Beautiful Gate, she would be able to give him a better answer.

"I am glad to hear it," said the man; "but I should like to put another question, if you would kindly permit me to do so."

"Well, what is it?" said Maggie, smiling with pleasure. She expected, from the pleasant-looking face of the man, that it would be some curious and diverting question.

"Have you ever been to school at Berea?" the man asked.

"Where?" said Maggie, shutting her left eye, and staring the man in the face with her right one.

“Oh, I see, you have never been there,” he answered. “I think I must sell you another little book, which will tell you all about it. You will find that the people of Berea were very remarkable folks, from whom we may learn a great deal.”

The little book which Maggie bought this time bore the quaint title, “Have you been to school at Berea?” She and her mother read it with great pleasure. After having told how Paul and Silas preached, first in Thessalonica and then in Berea, and how they fared at those places, the writer showed the great importance of searching the Scriptures, and earnestly advised everyone who was able to read to provide himself with a Bible, and not only to read it but to study it daily, because it would clear away all the wrong notions which we ignorant and sinful beings are so apt to entertain about the highest concerns of life. A short list of the prices of Bibles and New Testaments was added at the end, and Maggie, upon noticing that the sums mentioned were not so very large but that she could easily afford to pay for one at even the highest price, resolved to make her mother a present of a large-type Bible, and to buy one in small type for herself. No sooner had the man with the bag made his appearance the next time than she gave him an order for the two books. He did not fail to bring them the following day, adding that these were the school-books which were used at

the Berea School, and that he hoped she would learn the lessons which they contained; that most likely she would meet with some things in them which she would not understand at first, but that she should read on, praying God to give her understanding; and he assured her that the more she read in them the more matters would clear up to her, till at length she would see so many beautiful and wonderful things that she would feel like a poor pilgrim who had unexpectedly fallen in with a bag full of diamonds and jewels on his weary way.

A story is told of a company of tourists who, while strolling among the Bernese Alps, were benighted. After having groped in the dark for an hour or more, they resolved to spend the night at a certain spot where they felt they were treading on soft mossy soil, although the darkness prevented them from seeing where they were. As they were young and knew little of the cares of this life, they entertained each other with songs and merry talk, till at length the one after the other stretched himself out on the grass and fell asleep. When, a few hours later, the sun rose and the morning breeze awoke them, they discovered with horror that they were lying only a few steps from a vast precipice, and that they had been jesting, and singing, and sleeping on the very brink of what might have been their grave. They started up almost in a panic, and were only too glad

to see the way to quit the dangerous spot and return to their comfortable homes.

The sensations which must have agitated the minds of these people somewhat resembled those which passed through the heart of Maggie, when, by the reading of the Scriptures, the Gospel sun dispelled the spiritual darkness which had hitherto covered her soul. It became clear to her that from her childhood she had been walking without God and Christ in this world. It is true, she had never given herself up to pursuits which were injurious to her reputation as a thoroughly respectable girl, but she now perceived with alarm that the things to which she had given up her heart were none the less utterly vain and incapable of preserving her from perdition. It makes little difference in the end whether a man eats such things as are decidedly poisonous or only such as contain no nutrition. In both cases death will be the result. Maggie had hitherto known Jesus from hearsay, she had heard of Him as *a* Saviour, or as *the* Saviour, but she had never known Him as *her* Saviour. In fact, the term "Saviour" had been to her only a grand title without meaning, because she was not really aware of any danger from which she needed to be saved. But she saw that danger now, and started up with fright to take her refuge in Christ, whom she believed not only to have come into this world to save sinners in general, but

also herself in particular. The change which thus takes place in a man's heart is frequently a short process. Only a little time is required by a drowning man to catch hold of the hand held out to him. At all events, it did not take Maggie long. But short as such a process is, it forms the first page of a new and glorious book of which nobody will ever read the end.

Maggie's aged mother had not the slightest objection to the change which was soon noticeable in her daughter's life and conversation. The good old woman, who was subject to a nervous infirmity which caused her head to nod mechanically all the day long, saw no reason why she should stop nodding her head and take to shaking it when Maggie suggested that they might as well have prayers morning and evening, and go regularly to church on Sunday. She believed it was all right because Maggie thought it was, for since Maggie had become her constant companion she had got into the habit of allowing her to think, to speak, and to act for her, and she found that she had not by any means suffered through this. And, moreover, she was quite delighted with the large and neatly bound Bible Maggie had made her a present of. It is true, the types, though very large, were not large enough for her weak eyesight; but she was wonderfully helped by the use of a gigantic magnifying glass, set in a brass frame of four inches in

diameter, and with a mahogany handle, through which Maggie was frightened to look, as she always felt as though the letters were rising out of the book into her very face. Maggie could not read a word through it, and she thought that it must have been some such glass of which Paul spoke when he wrote of the people "seeing through a glass darkly." But the good old woman was delighted to be able to read the beautiful stories of the Old and New Testament with this dioptric instrument, and she admitted that Maggie was quite right in saying she ought to look to Jesus for help and salvation; for now she was old and weak, and weary of this life, and nobody could make her young and vigorous again save Jesus, who had made lame people to walk and leap, and blind people to see, and had raised Lazarus from the grave, and had Himself risen from the dead. Formerly she had always felt a shudder pass through her when she thought of the grave, how people would screw her down into a narrow wooden box, and how the gravedigger would make a deep, dark hole in the ground to put her in; but now she could think with calmness of all that, because she had no doubt that Jesus would raise her up again and make her happy with all the good people who had believed in Him.

To Maggie the hours were not nearly so long and tedious as they had been. She took more pleasure in sewing than formerly, because she thought she might

now find an object in it. It occurred to her that she might devote a portion of her money to buying tracts and Bibles for the poor people, of whom there were so many all round about. Accordingly she might often have been seen plying her needle with great energy. But, of course, the close sedentary labour soon wearied her, as she had not been brought up to it, and hers was a brisk, active, and somewhat restless nature. So she would often, as she used to do, throw her material on the table, and take her crutch and hobble to the door, where she could see people moving about in the way she would have liked to do. She now, however, looked at everything that was going on in quite a different light from what she had formerly done: she now pitied many a one whom formerly she would have envied, and many things now made her sorry which formerly would have made her glad.

One afternoon, when she was quietly sitting in her room busy plying her needle, she heard a noise of crying and quarrelling among the people in the street. She went to the door and saw a mob, chiefly boys and girls, laughing at a drunken man and mocking him. Adults ever and anon came between, some of whom were also drunk, and very soon a general fight ensued, which, but for the speedy interference of the police, might have proved disastrous to some. While Maggie was looking at this sad spectacle, her friend

who sold her the books happened to pass, and taking his stand close to her, he waited till the mob should move, and clear the thoroughfare; now and again he shook his head and gave utterance to his indignation.

“ Ay,” Maggie said, “ these are evil days, sir.”

“ Surely they are,” was the answer. “ But do you know what we ought to do when the days are evil ?”

“ What is it, sir ?”

“ We ought to redeem the time.”

Maggie thereupon candidly confessed that she did not quite understand what was meant by redeeming the time. The man took out a little tract from his bag and requested her to accept of it. It bore the title, “ Redeeming the Time because the Days are Evil.”

She walked away with it to her little room, and sat down to read it at once. The writer began by observing that evil days owed their origin to the circumstance of most people becoming evil-doers; that in such days the number of those who did well was comparatively small, and that to them it ought consequently to be a serious question, how to do as much good as they could, in order to counteract the evil other people were doing. He further observed that many good and well-intentioned people did not do nearly so much good as they might, because they did not make a good division of their time, but spent a great deal of it in a way which might have been

turned to greater account, for the good of others, and the furtherance of God's cause. "Time," he said, "is a precious article, which we should not waste, for we can never get back what we have lost of it. Now it often happens that a portion, and sometimes even a considerable portion, of our time is taken up by occupations, or by habits, which if not exactly bad, are at least wholly useless. Some people, for instance, sleep eight hours, whereas seven, or perhaps even six, would be quite sufficient. Some sit half-an-hour longer at their meals than is necessary, or may be found for hours at their windows looking into the street, or standing at their doors gossiping with their neighbours, thus allowing the time which might have been employed in some useful object to pass away in idleness."

Here Maggie took a pin and stuck it in at the passage, as she thought she might as well read it over again another time.

"Some people also," the writer continued, "who have an aversion to idleness, take up some work at random, merely for the purpose of killing the time, and to relieve the tedium of their spare hours, and, though the work thus taken up may be good enough in itself, yet they are not nearly so profitably employed as they would have been had they selected work more answering to the wants of the day, and more adapted to their own character and talents.

Many a young man, for instance, who has little or no talent for music might employ the time which he wastes with his flute much better if he would sit down for a few minutes at a poor invalid's sick-bed, and read a portion of God's word to him; and many a young girl who kills precious hours in writing long silly letters to friends, or in sketching indifferently would be much more useful if she would only visit a poor family or take a tract to a house where it might be read with a blessing. How much good might be done if people who have allowed such portions of their time to be occupied in frivolous pursuits would redeem time from its useless employment and turn it to some profitable object! How many poor people, for instance, are there who would be vastly benefited if some one would but devote a couple of hours a week to teaching them to read their Bibles! And how many poor children are there rambling about the streets, a nuisance to their neighbours, and a disgrace to society, who would be kept away from evil and turned to good if some one would only take care of them for an hour a day, and give them some useful instruction."

Here Maggie stuck another pin into the margin; she thought it would be as well for her to read these words over again the next day; she felt there was something in them worth thinking over.

Not many days had elapsed before Maggie one

morning after breakfast asked her mother whether she knew Lizzy Duncan, the glazier's wife. Now it should be mentioned that the old woman, infirm though she was, continued to keep up her old habit of making a tour three times a week through the various shops in the street to buy provisions. These errands at the same time served the purpose to her that a local newspaper does to others; they kept her cognizant of the news of the neighbourhood. She was sure to learn at the butcher's what the grocer did not tell her, or to learn at the grocer's what she had only heard darkly mooted at the baker's. This was the reason why there was scarcely an individual in the neighbourhood about whose person, circumstances, probable prospects, parents, or children, she could not have given the most accurate and circumstantial account. So with her usual introductory phrase, "Shouldn't I, child!" she told her daughter everything she wanted, and much she did not want to know, about Lizzy Duncan; that she was a complete slattern, who, by her disorderly habits and disgraceful conduct, had caused her husband to become a drunkard, and her children to be little else than vagabonds; that it was really a pity for the poor children, who were fine little creatures, especially the two eldest, Mary and Rachel, of the ages of thirteen and eleven respectively. When upon this Maggie asked her mother what she would think

were she to take the two girls an hour or two every day to teach them knitting and sewing, the old woman answered that she thought it would be a very good thing, provided she took them to the back-green first, to have their faces and hands washed, and their hair combed.

The next day, therefore, after having gone through the required cleaning process, Mary and Rachel were admitted into the parlour, and were seated upon two wooden stools. They were really nice-looking little girls, with rosy cheeks and lovely cheerful eyes, into which it was a pleasure to look. Maggie gave to each a knitting-needle and a bit of thread, and showed them the first move in the noble art of knitting stockings. While they were trying to get up to the manipulation of it, she took her handiwork, and while plying her needle told them a nice story. The two little creatures were quite delighted with their occupation, which had, for the first time in their lives, led them to the luxury of seeing their own hands and each other's faces in their natural hue. They also discovered in themselves what had hitherto been a talent wholly unknown to them, that of being able to sit still for two hours in one spot; and they liked it so well, that they felt rather disappointed when Maggie told them that their time was up. Next day they might have been seen an hour before their time lounging about the cripple's house, and watching the

hour when they would be expected to make their appearance.

But perhaps the old woman was most of all pleased. Every five minutes she would place herself behind the children, and with her big glass before her eyes would stoop down over them, and look at the progress they were making. She would praise their zeal, encourage them with cheerful words, and gently stroke their hair. Indeed, she was so delighted, that next week she suggested to Maggie that they should take the children in the forenoon as well as in the afternoon. This was just the thing Maggie desired, but she had expressly abstained from suggesting it, lest her little school should be a trouble to the old woman. She devoted the morning hours to teaching the children reading and writing with a pencil on a slate. She would also, weather permitting, go with them into the back-yard for half an hour to have a game at balls, or allow them to skip with a rope. And the neighbours whose back-windows opened into the yard, on seeing this happy little company, found it very nice, and doubtless some mothers would say to themselves, "I wish my little girls were there too."

At length one of these women expressed her wish; but Maggie declined, because the girl was already attending a school, and her parents, although they had to struggle hard to earn their daily bread, were

yet able to pay for her. But Maggie's parlour was quite large enough to afford accommodation for ten girls, and it was not long before she had that number. Yet she was very particular in selecting them. She only took such girls as were really abandoned or neglected by their parents—such girls, in fact, as would otherwise have been sure to ramble about in idleness if she had not taken them.

It is well known how similar charitable schools are usually conducted. Nor was there anything in Maggie's way of conducting her little school contrary to the general custom. She had never had any instruction as a schoolmistress, but her common-sense led her generally into the best way to keep her pupils usefully and agreeably occupied. What she chiefly aimed at was to enable them to read their Bible well, to mend their own clothes, and to find the way of salvation, if they should desire to walk in it. She succeeded on the whole very well in accomplishing these objects. As soon as she deemed a girl fit for going into service, she tried to find a situation for her. Her pupils turned out good, respectable servants, and some of them became truly Christian women.

Of course some expenses were connected with this work, and more especially that Maggie was not sparing in giving Bibles, tracts, and little religious books to the children as rewards for good conduct. To meet these expenses she continued to sew for people, and

in this work she was soon materially aided by her eldest and most advanced pupils, who in this way combined exercise for themselves with usefulness for their teacher. The profits soon became so ample that she was also able to give the children a hearty dinner now and then.

Six years passed in this way when her aged mother died. This was a great loss. The good old woman had till her last illness been an untiring and faithful help to her daughter.

"Maggie," she said, the day before she died, "I am going to my heavenly home, and must leave you behind. But we'll meet again soon, for Jesus has said that He will draw us all unto Him. So don't cry, my dear, but be consoled. I know your work is too much for you alone, and I wish I could tell you whom to take as a help; but I don't know anybody who loves the children, and would speak to them of good, and cook your dinner, and make your bed for you. But I'll tell you whom you might try—Mary Duncan. She was our first girl, with her sister Rachel, and we never had a better than her."

Maggie could not answer for sobbing. But when her mother was buried she sent for Mary, who for some time had been a servant in a grocer's. Mary was quite delighted at the proposal.

"But what wages do you expect?" Maggie asked. "You know I am not so rich as the grocer."

Mary's eyes glistened.

"No wages, Maggie," she answered. "You have already given me so much that I know you will give me all I want."

And so Mary came into Maggie's house, and, as a loving sister, took the place of the mother who was gone. And Maggie was sorry that she could not have told her mother of it, for she was sure the good woman would have learnt it with great pleasure before she went hence.

CAPTAIN HOPKINS' WHIM.

“**B**OTHER that Captain Hopkins !” said Mr. Glegg’s coachman one day to the groom ; “ I wish he had never come near Bridgemoor. Times were so pleasant before he came. The families were all so agreeable ; there was lots of fun every day, and plenty of tips going. But he has spoiled everything !”

There was some truth in what the coachman said. Bridgemoor is only a few miles distant from one of our largest manufacturing towns, and is situated in a very charming country. The railway has raised it from an insignificant hamlet to one of the wealthiest places in the neighbourhood. Walks and parks have been tastefully laid out, while elegant villas and stately mansions have been built. Roads have been constructed in every direction, up hills and down valleys, so that it is an easy matter at any time to get a drive of any length and through any variety of

scenery. Scattered throughout the neighbourhood are public houses of every description, ranging from the common beer-shop to the magnificent hotel, where people of all degrees may spend a happy evening. The families inhabiting the villas and mansions lived in undisturbed peace and unity with one another, till Captain Hopkins came and settled down among them. The captain was a man of independent means, perhaps a little past sixty. He had seen a deal of the world, and was gifted with a considerable amount of common sense. His appearance at Bridgemoor was looked upon at first as a decided gain to the locality, he being, to all appearance, a pleasant old gentleman, while his wife, who looked perhaps fifteen years younger than him, was a very kind, interesting lady. They had two daughters, Mary and Jane, pretty girls of twenty and twenty-two. Besides all this the Captain, through family relations, was slightly connected with Mr. Glegg, one of the wealthiest gentlemen of the place, and with Mr. Dinwood, Mr. Glegg's cousin, also a rich inhabitant of Bridgemoor. Through them he was introduced to other respectable households, and he and his family were expected to contribute not a little to the happy social intercourse.

And Captain Hopkins on his arrival at Bridgemoor had a firm conviction that he would find there a very agreeable circle of friends, amongst whom he could

spend the evening of his life in peace and happiness. He had known Mr. Glegg, who was about the same age as himself, for many years, and had always found him a sincere Christian man. In fact, the thing which chiefly induced him to remove to Bridgemoor was the hope of renewing his intimate acquaintance with Mr. Glegg, for he never doubted but that the circle in which that good man moved would afford everything that was desirable in the way of society for a Christian family. During his first few days at Bridgemoor he saw nothing but what confirmed this expectation. Mr. Glegg was highly respected in the church and, indeed, was one of its strongest supporters. In all the various schemes for practical usefulness and missionary labour connected with it, he took a very active part, occupying a prominent place in the committees, and his name never failed to appear at the head of the list of contributors. The clergyman, Mr. Browning, was his best friend.

But when a few months had elapsed, and Captain Hopkins had become a little better acquainted with Mr. Glegg's family life, and with the spirit that prevailed in the circle in which he had chosen to move, he found that the tendency of the conversation was very different from what he expected and desired. The members of these families, young as well as old, were, of course, all regular church-goers, while some of them even conducted Sunday classes. Their con-

duct, whether private or public, was highly respectable. But in the midst of all this there was a total lack of anything like truly religious intercourse. The conversation at their numerous gatherings, not only of the young people, but of the heads of families, turned always, with scarcely an exception, on temporal matters, the trifling interests of the day, political questions, or sometimes literary topics. Everything was carefully arranged for the gratification of the intellect, the taste, the senses; but scarcely anything was provided to supply the wants of the heart or to edify the soul in the knowledge and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, let it be understood at once that Captain Hopkins and his family were not so strict as to see anything sinful in conversation upon subjects of merely secular interest, or in music not of an exclusively sacred character, or in pictures which did not represent Bible subjects. On the contrary, they could thoroughly enjoy conversation upon the French Exhibition, or the Reform Bill, and could listen to a sonata of Mendelssohn, or admire a skilfully painted picture. But what they could not comprehend was how a number of Christian people could meet almost every day and fill up their time with varied and lively conversation without saying so much as a single word about Him whose name they bore, and whom they professed to regard as their Saviour. Mr. Glegg, it

is true, was an exception to this strange rule, but in a manner which was as strange as the rule itself. Whenever he and Captain Hopkins happened to sit next each other at any of these parties, a religious conversation would often take place between them, but in such a subdued voice that the rest of the company could not hear it. Mr. Glegg never even attempted to make the matter about which they were speaking a topic of general discussion. And when Captain Hopkins tried to do so, Mr. Glegg would either draw him aside to some remote corner of the apartment, or suddenly, as if some remark of one of the others had attracted his attention, he would join in the general talk, and thus prevent the Captain from continuing the special subject which engaged his mind. In short, Captain Hopkins found that it was quite impossible to get the conversation of his friends turned into a spiritual channel, and that if he was to continue his intercourse with them he would have to make up his mind to the prospect of never hearing a word worth remembering about religion.

Captain Hopkins might have put up with what he considered exclusively secular conversation, if he had been compelled by inevitable circumstances to join in it, and if the conversation took place in a steamboat, or in a railway carriage, or at a public *table-d'hôte*; for he was one that believed there was a time and place for everything, and that the neglect of that wise

rule often leads to the casting of pearls before swine. But here he found himself in the bosom of a society, the members of which were professedly religious, and some of them taking part in schemes of Christian usefulness. And if among such people there was neither time nor room for Christian intercourse, he might well ask *when* and *where* could there be time and room for it? In his opinion such a state of things was as strange as would be a company of merchants discussing every topic except commerce, or a clique of politicians talking about everything except politics.

Now, to guard against doing injustice to the Captain's friends, it ought to be mentioned that sometimes there seemed to be an exception to their rule. This was the case when, for instance, a new school-room was to be built, or a public meeting to be got up for some religious purpose, or a collection arranged to clear off a debt or to raise a fund in connection with a religious enterprise. But useful, and often necessary as such conversations were, Captain Hopkins was of opinion that they could not well be called *religious* or *Christian* intercourse, inasmuch as the *Church* was more touched upon than *Christ*; for which reason he was inclined to call it *Church* conversation. He admitted, of course, that the connection between Christ and His Church was so close and intimate, that the true interests of the latter were likewise the interests of the former, and that to promote the welfare of

the Church was only, in other words, to promote the cause of Christ. Accordingly he was of opinion that it would be difficult to imagine regular intercourse between Christians, without such things as the building of schools, the getting up of meetings, and the raising of funds, being introduced, inasmuch as persons who cordially loved the Head of the Church could not be indifferent to any matter which concerned His body, however remotely. But, on the other hand, it was the Captain's firm opinion that conversation which was never carried farther than mere Church matters, never pushed so far as to reach the Head himself, could not well be called *Christian* conversation. He believed that Christ and His Church were inseparable, but he held at the same time that conversation which only admitted the discussion of Church matters, and always kept Christ himself in the back-ground, was little else than a severing of Christ from His Church.

Of course the Captain would occasionally speak his mind to his friend Mr. Glegg, when they happened to be alone.

"I know what you mean," Mr. Glegg would reply; "you desire to see a little more Christian life amongst us. I agree with you there. It is very desirable. But you know, my dear Captain, it is not in a man's power to create, or even to increase spiritual life. It is the Spirit of God that quickeneth."

“True,” the Captain would reply; “but the agency of the Spirit does not exclude the co-operation of men. We are enjoined to ‘strengthen each other’s faith’ and to ‘strengthen the things which are ready to die.’ Now, I am afraid much is ready to die amongst us, and in my opinion it is more than time for us to set about strengthening it.”

“I hope you are not alluding to anything improper you have noticed amongst us, which I am not aware of?”

“Not at all. But you must admit that the conversation which goes on amongst us is characterised by a very unspiritual, I might almost say worldly-minded, tone. The young people, though they keep within the bounds of decency and propriety, yet indulge in a light, vain kind of talk, which I cannot reconcile with that hallowed heavenly-mindedness that should characterise every one, whether young or old, who is conscious of having been bought by the blood of Christ. I grant that youth is the time for merriment and sport, and I should be as ready as any to laugh at young Christians assuming a grave appearance as though they were old patriarchs, and anxiously keeping aloof from amusement, as if they were inmates of an asylum for aged and infirm people. You know, Glegg, that I can enjoy a good joke, and though I am past sixty, yet I sometimes plume myself upon being a match for many a young fellow on the bowling-

green. But you also know that our entire evenings are spent in nothing else than in telling anecdotes, and cracking jokes, and making puns, and giving out riddles and conundrums, and all that sort of thing. And the older members of the company, if they do not join the younger in these frivolities, spend their time in discussing matters which, though of more importance for this world, are certainly not of much more value for the world to come. Now take, for example, our evening at Dinwood's last night. First, there was a confused babblement while tea was being served. Then some of the ladies gave us a little music, during which the gossiping parties seemed to run a race with each other in drowning the tones of the piano. I pitied the poor performers, who exerted all their talents before an audience which did not even profess to listen to them. I mixed with the different groups just to learn what they were talking about. I found that some were engaged in lively conversation about horses. Another couple were criticising the villa which Stratten, the banker, has built on the hill. A third group were discussing the merits of a recently published novel. Mrs. Dinwood, Mrs. Hale, and Mrs. Gurney were telling each other their experiences with reference to their servants. Finally, some of the gentlemen went into the dining-room to play a game at bagatelle; others took to chess playing, and some took up a puzzle. And thus the whole evening went in

sheer dissipation. Now, you know as well I do, that this was not an exceptional case. Most of our evenings are spent in a similar manner. It is true that there may sometimes chance to be a little bit more of regular conversation about literature or politics, but even then there is nothing which would indicate that we are a company of Christians. Last week, owing to circumstances over which I had no power, I was led to spend an evening at Mr. Longdale's. Now, you know that the Longdales are notoriously irreligious; I even learn that the old gentleman is an infidel, and his family are never seen in church or chapel. Still they are what is called 'respectable people,' and are praised on account of their activity in philanthropic undertakings. Well, as I said, I spent an evening with them, and I declare I was not able to observe any difference between their conversation and ours."

"What you say is all perfectly true," Mr. Glegg replied, "and I admit it is very sad. But I do not see how it can be helped, except by patiently and prayerfully waiting upon the Lord, whose Spirit alone is mighty to change the heart. Indeed you may be glad to find matters amongst us such as they are. I found them much worse when I came here eight years ago. The Dinwoods, the Hales, the Gurneys, and most of the other families with whom we now keep up intercourse were very much in the same spirit, and lived in the same style, as the Longdales. They sel-

dom or never went to church, and a great deal of sporting, billiard-playing, and gambling went on among them. My influence was blessed as a means of gradually bringing them to attend church regularly. My cousin Dinwood was the first whom I prevailed upon to take to a more orderly course of life, and then others followed. I am thankful to have been enabled to bring them even thus far. I know it is not far enough. I may have converted them to the church, but I am afraid none of them are converted to Christ. And there ends my power."

"And how long is it since you got them into that better way of living?"

"Four or five years, I think."

"And during all that period have you been trying all you could to lead them further on?"

"In the beginning I threw out a hint or two to Dinwood, but I found that he would not take it. To tell you the truth, I am afraid Dinwood is a sceptic, if he is anything at all. He never talks to me about his religious opinions. In fact, I believe he does not care about religion, and if he attends service and contributes to religious causes, he does so only for the sake of his reputation. Since church-going has become fashionable amongst us, he, of course, sees that it won't do to be an exception."

"And how do matters stand with reference to the heads of other families?"

"Very much the same, I suspect. Mr. Hale might be prevailed upon to join in religious conversation for a minute or two, but I am afraid it would soon come to controversy, and then everything would be spoiled, of course."

"I do not see that everything would be spoiled," the Captain observed; "controversy is often indispensable to people coming to a true understanding and to true peace."

"No, no,—not that!" cried Mr. Glegg. "I am certain that our friendly intercourse would soon break up altogether, and instead of peace we should only have enmity and separation."

"But, my dear Glegg," the Captain answered, "our present peace *is* no peace, but rather the stillness of death. Let us try to introduce God's Word into our family meetings. Suppose that at the next party at your house you propose, after tea, that we have a common Bible reading. Give a Bible to each person; read a verse or two, and let us have a general discussion upon them under your leadership. You are sufficiently well-versed in the Bible to be able to answer questions, and I will gladly assist you. And if any difficulties occur which none of us should be able to solve, we will ask the clergyman to come to our assistance. I feel assured he will be quite delighted to do so."

"No, no, Captain, that won't do," cried Mr. Glegg.

"It would be like throwing a bomb-shell, which would blow everything to pieces."

"But you surely do not mean to say that the Word of God is only a destructive shell? It may be so to some, but to others it may prove the bread that giveth and sustaineth life—a fresh shower on a parched land."

"Oh! I am assured you would gain nothing and lose everything by it," said Mr. Glegg, in an alarmed voice. "I know Dinwood's mind. He would try everything to make a mess of it. And Gurney, you know, is a hot-tempered, irritable man, who cannot brook contradiction. I am sure a total break-up would follow."

"But, my dear Glegg, only think, it concerns the eternal welfare of souls. Our friends are really in the dark. They are without Christ, and without salvation. The world is their god, and money is their treasure. They have neither a God nor a treasure in heaven. Is it right to leave them in this condition, merely to avoid a little bit of controversy?"

But still the Captain's words were addressed to deaf ears. Mr. Glegg entreated him not to think of such an "unwise thing," as he called it. He was startled at the idea of seeing the families, now so amicably and peacefully united, roused into open war with each other. He admitted, however, that it was a sad thing to think of their present ignorance and indifference.

Yet, by all means, let there be no controversy—let peace be preserved.

But what happened ? A few weeks later a relative of Mr. Glegg's and Mr. Dinwood's died, and, from a doubtful expression in his will, a difference arose between the two cousins about a sum of £2000. This difference grew into a controversy, and the controversy threatened to issue in a law-suit. The peace between the two families was broken, and all intercourse between them was stopped ; and the other families, not wishing to get into bad terms with either, kept very much aloof from both. It was hoped, however, that an amicable settlement might be brought about, and that the matter would not be carried into court. For everybody perceived that the breach would then become quite irreparable.

Captain Hopkins was one of the first who tried to interfere for good.

"Now, Glegg," he said, "here is an opportunity for you to show your aversion to controversy and your love for peace. Leave the £2000 alone ; allow Dinwood to take the money, and peace will be restored at once."

Mr. Glegg stood aghast.

"Hopkins, are you mad ?" he asked.

"I am not. I am speaking words borrowed from your own wisdom : By all means let there be no controversy—let peace be preserved !"

"All very well, Captain ; but £2000 are not a trifle, you know."

"But they are less than a trifle, when compared with the salvation of a soul. You refused to allow controversy for the sake of Christ, and how can you allow peace to be broken for the sake of a miserable heap of dust ? Show now that you love peace rather than money."

Mr. Glegg got angry. "You talk like an old woman," he said. "It is impossible to keep the peace with such an unjust fellow as Dinwood. It is not so much for the money as for the sake of right that I am determined to carry the matter into court."

"Hitherto I have only spoken with words of your own wisdom," the Captain said ; but I will now speak my own words. I have seen Dinwood about the matter, and I have prevailed upon him to let his claim drop provided you do the same, and allow the money to go to the support of charitable institutions. Neither of you are in need of the money."

"Of course, of course !" cried Mr. Glegg, "that's a fine way for him to get out of the scrape with honour, the scrape which he has brought himself into through his injustice. He knows very well that his claim will prove utterly void if the case is brought into court. Tell Dinwood that if I want to support charitable institutions I am not in need either of his permission or his assistance."

"I am sorry to say that I have found Dinwood, though he professes nothing, to be more just and less attached to Mammon than you are, though you profess to be a regenerated child of God. I am afraid, dear Glegg, that the devil has caught you in his snare. Infidelity and indifference as to religion are bad, but covetousness is worse."

"That is strong language," said Mr. Glegg, in an angry tone ; "good-bye."

From that day the peace between Mr. Glegg and the Captain was also broken. This was not the blame of the latter, of course ; but Mr. Glegg never set foot on the Captain's threshold, nor did he even speak to him when he happened to see him at church or on the road. A law-suit was at length instituted, and it lasted many months. Mr. Dinwood was the gainer, and Mr. Glegg had to pay a large sum for expenses. The family of Mr. Glegg were enraged, especially when they learned that the Captain and Mr. Dinwood had become friends. A report was spread that, but for the Captain's uncalled-for interference, the matter might have been settled in an amicable way. Poor Captain Hopkins was henceforth the scapegoat in the estimation of the Glegg party.

How was it that the Captain and Mr. Dinwood became friends ?

The Captain one day invited Mr. Dinwood, and Mr. Glegg, and the other families, to an evening

party. The invitation was conveyed in a note, in which it was stated that after tea a family Bible meeting would be held. Mr. Glegg and his family alone failed to make their appearance. The others who were invited appeared delighted with the plan; some had even brought their Bibles with them. There was a great deal of discussion about the verses read, and sometimes there was a little bit of controversy; but the Captain knew how to keep the conversation within the limits of a calm, quiet discussion. Perfect liberty of opinion and speech was allowed, and Mr. Dinwood, who turned out to hold Unitarian views, was requested by Captain Hopkins to speak out his mind fully. Of course the Captain met all his objections, and much to his delight found a strong ally in Mr. Gurney; who, at the beginning, appeared quite shocked by Mr. Dinwood's reasonings, but on seeing that the Captain met him in a calm, quiet way, and that Mr. Dinwood spoke only as an honest man, and stated his views because he really thought they were right, he subdued his temper and took part in the discussion. The young people also listened with great attention, and some even ventured a question or an objection.

It was not the Captain's intention, however, to have the evening party changed into a regular Scripture-reading meeting. What he wished to have was an ordinary evening party at which truly Christian topics

would not be excluded from the conversation, so the reading was *not* opened with a formal offering up of prayer. And after the reading and the discussions had lasted for an hour or so, the Captain requested one of the ladies to "give them some music," and a sonata of Beethoven's was played. The conversation then went on in its usual form, but the Captain noticed with pleasure that Mr. Dinwood and Mr. Gurney continued to discuss some religious questions between themselves.

The evening thus spent was so much liked, that the next week Mr. Dinwood held a similar party at his house ; other families soon followed the example, and the clergyman became a frequent guest, being delighted to discover this token of spiritual life in his parish.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

LEAVES FROM A CLERGYMAN'S DIARY.

Feb. 2, 1867.

I CHANCED to call on Mrs. Everett this morning, and it was lucky that I did so ; for she has furnished me with matter for at least ten sermons. Truly a minister's best study is his own church. Each member is a book from which he may get a vast amount of theological knowledge, if he only knows how to read it. Lord, give me understanding that I may be able to read the epistles written, not with ink, but with the Holy Spirit ! Thou still continuest to reveal unto us Thy wondrous deeds, although our eyes are so often dimmed by ignorance, prejudice or pride. Cause Thy light to shine upon me, that I may clearly see Thy invisible things in the visible works of Thy creation !

Mrs. Everett is one of my best members. She lives in close communion with God. She has gone through many sore trials, but the medicine has done her good.

She took it as coming from the hand of a loving Father, and it has made her not bitter but better. She has not many hairs on her head now, but even when her ringlets flowed in rich profusion down her shoulders she believed that every hair was numbered. Whatever pleasant things her mirror may have told her in her youth, she never failed to remember that she was but dust and ashes. So she trustfully placed herself in the hands of Him who is mighty to call forth life from the dust of death, and to make it mount up like a phoenix out of the ashes of corruption.

Her husband, who was a master joiner, died a few years ago, leaving her with two sons. Fortunately the elder, Paul, was old enough to carry on his father's business, and had also the requisite ability. His brother, Theodore, is two years younger, and he is apprenticed to a coachmaker in the Euston Road, not far from his mother's house. Both are very nice lads, though they differ as to tastes and temper. Paul is spirited, hot-tempered, full of enterprise, and, quick as the wind, he often dashes on like a mountain torrent. Theodore, on the contrary, is quiet and composed, rather slow, perhaps, and often too pensive and abstracted in his thoughts. Paul is not altogether free from a certain suspiciousness. He is very apt to ascribe such actions as displease him to evil motives, and he cannot easily be brought to forgive an offence.

Theodore is less sensitive to disagreeable impressions. He soon forgets a past injury ; but he is also apt to forget that everybody cannot take matters so easy as he himself takes them.

This description of their characters is given from my own personal observation ; and from what their mother told me this morning I find that it is pretty correct. I used to see the two young men only occasionally, at church, in the class, or at prayer and other meetings. I always expected good of them, for both manifested much interest in the cause of God, though each did it in his own peculiar way. Their conduct proved that their Christian training had not been in vain. It is true, I could not say positively that they were converted young men, but I could not have felt myself justified in saying the contrary, either. In fact, I was not well enough acquainted with the condition of their inner life to pass a decided opinion. Only it appeared to me as though some thin cloud had been spread over their souls, which prevented the Sun of Righteousness from reflecting His image upon them with undimmed brilliancy. This seemed especially the case with Paul. "There must be something the matter with that young man," I often thought. "He has no peace. He is not fully at rest with himself." But what it was I did not know.

But I know it now. From what Mrs. Everett told

me in our conversation this morning, I have learnt that there has of late been ill-feeling between the two brothers ; more so, however, on the part of Paul than of Theodore. It is a common saying that there is no mischief in the world but a woman is at the bottom of it, and so it was here. But the young lady concerned was as innocent in the matter as a child.

That the two brothers had never been intimate, may be easily understood. Close intimacy could scarcely be expected between characters so widely different. It is true, it has often been observed that characters which are apparently the most opposite to each other form the best materials for a deep and lasting union, but then they must have some strongly attracting element in common, which overrules differences so powerfully as to dovetail them into one another, if one may speak so. Such a power of attraction was not wanting in Paul, but it was so in Theodore. Phrenologists would most likely have said that he had no organ of "adhesiveness." Paul, on the other hand, could not have been happy without at least one friend ; and he had one, a very promising young man of his own age, of the name of Frederic, to whom he felt as deeply and tenderly attached as David did to Jonathan. Besides, he had many other friends, who were, so to speak, secondary to Fred, for Paul was a sociable fellow, and as much liked by his companions as he was fond of them. Theodore, again,

had no friends, and he did not want any. He liked to live quietly by himself. So his brother, finding little in him that was attractive, could not help leaving him in the isolation in which he preferred to live. While Paul was enjoying the company of his friends, Theodore might be seen in his little room reading books on the art of illumination, or exercising himself in the colouring of pictures.

Even though there be not any bosom friendship between two brothers, yet there may and there ought to be mutual good feeling and cordial sympathy with each other's concerns. Nor was there any lack of kindness or affection on the part of Theodore, only he showed that sentiment in his own peculiar way, and not in the manner Paul desired it should be shown. He never refused to do any service to Paul, but he did not offer his services warmly. And this was, not because he did not care, but because he did not observe. He was regardless of his own little interests and comforts; and he was so of Paul's and of everybody else's. He was ready enough to help, but his great fault was that he never observed *how* and *where* he could best help. His mind being constantly turned in upon itself, he often forgot his obligations to those around him. When Paul was in ecstasies he would unintentionally whistle a tune, not perceiving how that uncalled-for musical performance grated upon his brother's feelings. When Paul was burning with

anger he would remain quite cool, wondering within himself how a few grains of gunpowder could give such a tremendous explosion. His phlegmatic temper, manifested in this way, was something quite unbearable to Paul. Many disagreeable scenes took place between them in consequence. Especially was this the case when, owing to Theodore's thoughtlessness, Paul lost an opportunity of making a profit or enjoying a pleasure.

As there was a deal in Theodore's character which repelled Paul, so there was something in Paul's which Theodore disapproved of. It was Paul's love of excitement and sensuous impressions. And to a certain extent Theodore was right. The friends with whom Paul conversed were all respectable young men; no one could have charged them with anything like vice; but Theodore was quite correct when he said that they were more eager in their chase after pleasure than after knowledge. It was Frederic's character more especially which met with his censure. Frederic was an accomplished, amiable young man, but he was not a Christian: indeed, he was more of a sceptic than anything else. He would occasionally express a doubtful opinion about the Bible, and he was certainly more fond of the theatre than of the church, although he regularly attended service every Sunday. Paul admitted that in this respect Frederic was not exactly what he wished him to be. But, apart from his

religious opinions, he urged that Frederic was undoubtedly possessed of many good qualities, and often expressed his confidence that their friendship would be instrumental in bringing his friend round some day. Theodore, on the contrary, was much afraid that the very reverse might be the case, and that Frederic would lead Paul into lightness and scepticism. Mrs. Everett could not help agreeing with Theodore in this. She warmly wished either that Frederic had better opinions or that Paul had a better friend. But Paul defended his friend with might and main, and this matter too often caused disagreeable conversations between the brothers.

Indeed, it was to be feared that there was some ground for the misgivings of Theodore and Mrs. Everett as to Paul's influence for good upon Frederic's mind. They had observed that of late Paul had not made much progress in godliness. True, he continued to observe outward religious forms as strictly as ever; he conducted family worship morning and evening; he took part, as usual, in the religious schemes connected with our church; and he abstained from anything that was openly incompatible with the Christian character: but for all that it seemed as though, in the midst of all this manifestation of religious life, the spirit from which that life had to derive its strength and nourishment was gradually fading away. It was evident that his pleasure in the Word

and work of God diminished in the very measure his intimacy with Frederic increased. Formerly he used to show a delight and an interest in broaching questions about religious matters and in discussing them, but now he seldom opened a conversation of this kind, and if induced to take part in one, he always cut it as short as possible. On the other hand, secular topics were always welcome to him, and he could dwell upon them with a zest and pleasure which showed that his heart was in them. But what especially indicated a decline in his spiritual growth, was the increase of his bad temper. The least difficulty or obstruction excited him; the most trifling neglect would often rouse him to choler; and the mistakes or neglects of his brother he would especially censure with all the cutting bitterness of his ill-humour.

This was a source of great grief to Mrs. Everett. Paul, it is true, never allowed his temper to rise to such a height as to forget the respect due to his mother. In most cases it was only necessary for her to make her appearance, and Paul's anger was subdued at once; and when, in a kind motherly tone, she spoke to him about his want of meekness and self-control, he always confessed his fault and received her earnest admonitions with respectful silence. But what chiefly made her anxious about him was that she observed that he was losing more and more his faith in the Lord's providential care in every occurrence of

our lives, even the most trifling: he would often express doubt as to whether all those petty annoyances and vexations which every day irritated his temper could be rightly looked upon as coming from the hand of God. When Theodore forgot to inform him of anything he should have told him of, or did things from thoughtlessness which he knew were disagreeable to him, he looked upon Theodore as the one cause of the mischief, and could not imagine how there could be any reason in God causing him to suffer the painful effects of such irregularities. He would rather suppose some evil spirit had a hand in the matter, and found but too ready access to Theodore's mind to vex and torment him. He admitted that it was the very nature of Christian charity to think no evil, and so he tried as much as was in his power to suppose that Theodore was not led by any bad intention when he caused him annoyance or grief; but he had to confess that it often cost him much trouble to put this charitable construction upon his brother's behaviour towards him, because it was well known that there was but little sympathy between them, and that Theodore cared scarcely anything for what his brother liked.

It was this querulous, suspicious spirit, in connexion with Paul's doubts as to God's divine presence and paternal providence, which made Mrs. Everett exceedingly anxious about the state of her son's soul. She

also often spoke to Theodore, and remonstrated with him about his coldness and supineness, and besought him to have more regard to his brother's concerns and to the peculiarities of his irritable character. But, poor woman, she knew only too well, that it was more difficult for a slow character, like that of Theodore, to rouse itself, than it was for a spirited character, like that of Paul, to curb its excesses.

It happened one day that Frederic called upon Paul, and not finding him in, left a message with Theodore. This message was to the effect that Paul was expected early the next morning at the railway station to join a pic-nic party. It had been arranged that they should go the trip on that day instead of, as was at first suggested, a few days later. Unfortunately Theodore forgot all about the message, so that his brother was not informed of the alteration in the arrangement till his friends had returned home. Paul was almost beside himself with rage when he learned that this loss of pleasure was to be attributed to his brother's negligence; and what especially sharpened the sting of his anger was his suspicion that Theodore had intentionally forborne to tell just to keep him away. He knew that Theodore was no great admirer of such parties, more especially when Frederic was to be there. It was in vain that Theodore gave assurances of his sincere sorrow for his neglect; Paul could not believe that it was owing to

mere forgetfulness. The matter was, in his estimation, too important to be forgotten.

And certainly Theodore would have been sure to have kept it in mind had the pic-nic been as important to him as it was to his brother; for there was a special reason why the party was so very important to Paul. Among the company was Margaret Leslie, upon whom he had set his affection. She was certainly a superior girl, a daughter of pious parents, and herself not far from the kingdom of God. Nobody was aware of Paul's attachment except his mother, and she was quite delighted with it. She looked upon it as a providential leading of God, and as an answer to her prayers. There could have been nothing more grievous to her than that Paul should fix his love upon a worldly-minded girl; she was all but sure that in that case the ruin of his soul would be inevitable. In her anxiety about his spiritual condition, she had constantly prayed to God to give him a wife who feared His name. The tender, loving, faithful mother's wish was now, it seemed, to be realized. Margaret, it is true, was not yet aware of Paul's affection; but taking all things into account, there was every reason to expect that the proposal of the handsome, accomplished young man, who carried on a very thriving business, would be favourably received. Paul had not had many opportunities of meeting with her, as she lived as far away as Green-

wich, but on the few occasions he had been in her company he believed he had made favourable impressions upon her. It had been his intention, if an opportunity offered itself at the proposed pic-nic, to give more positive evidence of his affection than she had hitherto received. This opportunity was now lost, and such another was not likely to present itself again soon. One may, therefore, imagine the greatness of that loss in Paul's estimation, and how it made him look still more coldly upon Theodore as being the cause of what he considered the greatest disappointment he had yet experienced. Of course, Paul left his brother in ignorance of the special reason why his neglect in this instance was more serious than any other, but Mrs. Everett could not help admitting that if ever Theodore had given Paul just ground for anger he had given it now. Still it was hoped that there might soon be another opportunity of repairing the loss. But this hope suddenly vanished in smoke. One may picture to oneself Paul's feelings when, a few weeks later, Frederic told him in an ecstasy of joy that he was engaged to be married to Margaret Leslie. It was on the occasion of the pic-nic party that he, having been appointed her cavalier, had made such close acquaintance with her as had determined him to solicit her hand. Paul was magnanimous enough not to betray his intense grief to his friend, but forced himself into

expressions of his best wishes for Frederic's happiness, while he felt that his own was gone for ever.

I shall not try to describe the deep grief that filled Mrs. Everett's heart at this turn of affairs. She mourned for Paul. She feared lest the shock would prove too much for him, and make him forsake God, as, in the bitterness of his grief, he might suppose that God had forsaken him. She was sorry for Margaret's sake. She could not believe that her union with Frederic was likely to promote her true happiness. Frederic was undoubtedly superior to Paul as to intellectual endowments; and advanced as he was in sceptical notions, he was much more likely to influence Margaret for evil than she was to influence him for good. Nor could she understand how Margaret's parents could have given their consent to this match, unless their eyes were blinded by the natural amiability of the young man, and by his favourable circumstances. She did not know, what she learnt afterwards, that Frederic had used the stratagem, alas! only too common with young men when they are trying to win a girl's regards, and had clothed his thoughts in just such expressions as he expected would be acceptable to her and her friends. Not that Frederic was a base hypocrite. But if there was one text in the Bible in which he believed, it was that which says: "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." It is certain

enough that the text is in the Bible ; but whether Frederic made a right use of it, is a question which I beg to answer in the negative.

The worst fears of the anxious mother threatened to be realised. Paul became more and more indifferent to everything. The crossness of his temper increased, and there was all but a breach between him and Theodore. Those were sad days in the good widow's life. Still there was one thing that cast a ray of light through the darkness. Paul gradually dropt off his intimacy with Frederic. The young men saw each other less frequently, because Frederic often spent his evenings at Greenwich now. Besides, Paul could no longer enjoy the conversation of a friend to whom he could least of all reveal the secret that troubled his mind. The two young men, it is true, continued to see each other occasionally ; but Frederic ceased to exercise any influence upon Paul's mind. The poor young man, now deprived both of his friend and of the object of his love, became very solitary and unsociable. Life lost all its charms for him. It was a critical period in his spiritual state. Separated from the influence of a friend who threatened to lead him in the wrong way, it was now to be seen whether he was to continue that course independently, or return to the way in which his parents had taught him to walk. There were signs which indicated that the latter would be

the case. Having given up all his out-door recreations, he began to devote his quiet hours at home to literary pursuits. The books which he read were chiefly of a religious character, and this showed that he at least looked for consolation to the invisible world, now that the visible had left him poor and miserable. Nor did these spiritual exercises fail to produce a soothing and beneficial effect upon his heart. But there was still one perplexing question which depressed his mind. He could not be brought to see how the bitter cup he had to drink could be mixed by the hand of a loving God and Father. It was Theodore who, in his opinion, had prepared it. And the longer that dismal thought haunted his spirit, the more his brother became an eye-sore to him.

It was at this juncture that, as Mrs. Everett told me, Paul heard me preach a sermon which made a deep impression upon his mind, more especially one passage in it. The text was the well-known saying of Joseph to his brethren: "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." I knew nothing of what was going on in Mrs. Everett's family, but I remember that something had taken place in my church which had led me to utter the following sentences:—

"Many, if not most of the calamities that befall us are caused by the carelessness or by the passion of

men. These are the hardest of all to bear. When disasters of a purely natural kind afflict us, we can derive an invaluable treasure of consolation from our belief that it is God, and God alone, whose hand has laid this cross upon our shoulder. But when we can trace the cause of our affliction to the neglect or the malignity of man, we are prone to see only man's hand in the matter, and instead of the sweet balm of consolation, the poison of suspicion, of hatred, and vengeance flows into our wounded spirit. Let me beseech you, brethren, to be on your guard against such a view of your sufferings. It is in this manner that the occurrences of life are viewed by the heathen—by the natural man, who looketh on the outward appearance only, and cannot discover the invisible hand of God. It is quite true that wicked men, such as Joseph's brothers were at the time when they sold him to the Ishmaelites, carry out their evil thoughts contrary to the law, against the desire of God, and to the prejudice of his friends; and in this sense it is a fact that they, and none but they, are the sole cause of the calamity that afflicts the righteous. They are guilty, they deserve punishment, and, unless they repent, they are sure some day to obtain the due reward of their wickedness from the hand of God. So there is nothing unreasonable or unlawful in your being grieved at them, in detesting their evil deeds, in showing your displeasure or indignation, and in

pointing them to the awful responsibility which they have incurred. But there are two important truths which, in such circumstances, we are apt to overlook under the influence of passion, and these I feel bound to set before you.

“*First*, So long as we are living in the day of grace, we are not to judge but, if possible, to save our enemies. This truth has been strongly inculcated on the mind of the Church by the example of her great Lord and Head. When on earth He knew that He was appointed the future judge of the world, and, consequently, of His enemies; and yet He did not judge them here, but prayed for them, for He kept in mind that God had not sent Him into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. So, not minding His own personal comfort and happiness in this life, He tried what He could do for their salvation through love, before He should have to give them their reward through justice. Joseph, of whom our text speaks, was in a similar position with reference to his brethren. He too was raised to a rank which gave him the right and the power to judge and to condemn them. But before he exercised that right and power he tried, through love, to work upon their hearts unto salvation. And the end of this beautiful story shows that his charitable efforts were crowned with success. They repented at his feet, and thus he saved as a

brother those whom he otherwise must have destroyed as a judge. Well, brethren, we too are in a similar position with reference to our enemies, who injure us through their wickedness. We too are appointed as their future judges. 'Do you not know,' the Apostle asks the Church, 'that the saints shall judge the world? that the world shall be judged by *you*?' Of course we shall, for we are the members of Christ, and we are destined to reign and to judge the world with Him. But observe, dear brethren, that great day of our power and glory has not yet dawned. Our Lord has not yet ascended His judgment-seat, and it does not behove us to try to take our place there before He has taken His. This is the day of grace. We ourselves are saved by grace. We live by grace. We have to do the work of grace. We too are sent into this world not to condemn but to save it. So let us, after the pattern of our adorable Lord, not threaten our enemies, but pray for them. Let us, like Him, try through love to make them such as will not by us be judged with the world, but such as will one day judge the world *with* us.

"*Secondly*, The evils which men bring upon us as our enemies, testify nothing against God as our friend. Let us not suppose that the thoughts of evil men can in any way be reflections of God's thoughts over us. God's love to Joseph did not decrease in measure as the hatred of his brothers against him increased. On

the contrary, God's mind moved in the very opposite direction. While they thought evil, God was thinking to make it for good. We weak creatures of flesh and blood are very apt to rest the peace of our mind upon the favour of flesh and blood. As sinful beings who carry always about with us a more or less accusing conscience in our bosom, we are prone to look upon our enemies as a kind of executioners sent by God to visit us with the rod of justice. When men abandon us we are apt to ask, 'Hath God also forsaken us?' When men injure us, we fear lest God has given us up to be dealt with according to our sins. When men treat us carelessly, we think it an evidence that God likewise has ceased to care about us. Or we feel inclined to suppose that it is not a living God, but a cold, cruel fate that rules things here below; and that our life and happiness are not dependent upon the will of a wise, tender-hearted and mighty Father in heaven, but upon the accidental play of circumstances. Now, I beseech you, brethren, be on your guard against all such thoughts as these. They are heathenish, and do not become a Christian. We who have seen God manifested in the flesh know that He is a living and a loving God. We who have seen Jesus forsaken by all men, know that God still remains a God of life and resurrection unto us, even though men should crucify and kill us. We do not base our judgment of the relation that exists between

God and ourselves upon the testimony of flesh and blood, but upon the Word of God. We do not believe that God loves us because our friends love us, but because God's Son has died for us. We are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, and not through a decree of men carried by a majority of votes. Whether men love or hate us, it is all the same, we know that we are God's children, so long as we sincerely love Him in Jesus Christ our Lord. Whether our outward circumstances be pleasant or painful, we know that they have nothing to do with our relationship to God. We do not interpret our relation to God by our circumstances, but we interpret our circumstances by our relation to God. We know that *all* things, even the most trying, must work together for good to those who love God. This knowledge, brethren, should render our hearts to a large extent independent of the evil influences from without. It should make us take our stand like men, like kings even. It should make us firm as a rock in the midst of the waves, unshaken though continually beaten upon. If we believe that nobody really can hurt us, room is left for loving everybody, and for cordially pitying those who do try to hurt us. Let us not have such high thoughts of man as to suppose that he should be mighty to turn to evil the good that God himself has prepared for us. Nor let us entertain such low thoughts of God as to doubt

whether He is mighty to turn to good the evil which men may think against us."

The effect which, under God's blessing, this passage of my sermon had upon Paul's mind was such as to make him see again the smiles of God's countenance through the mists of his affliction. He was ashamed of the narrow-mindedness with which he had looked at Theodore and at the trials which his neglect had chiefly caused. He came to see that his anger, his want of peace, his gloomy suspiciousness, and his hatred, were evidences of his dependence upon men, upon their favour or disfavour, their doings or neglects. This led him to look into himself, and to earnestly inquire whether he had really given his heart to God through Christ. This prayerful and honest self-examination was blessed to his heart. Its effect was soon noticed both by his mother and brother. The dark frown which of late had dwelt permanently upon his brow, gradually softened and disappeared. His heart and lips were again opened to friendly intercourse; the family conversation, which of late had resembled the noise and screeching of an old rusty engine, now went on smoothly since the wheels were oiled with kindness and affection. It is true, a melancholy shade still continued to dim the brightness of his face, which formerly had looked so happy. But his mother prayed and hoped that in the course of time the sun of faith would also dispel those dismal clouds.

Paul, however, continued to find a hard enemy in his temper, and Theodore, who continued as slow and abstracted as ever, often put his brother's patience to the test. One morning—it was the 8th of January—Paul, who was to go out skating with Frederic, had placed his skates on the fender near the fire, that they might be well dried. Whilst he was out of the room Theodore placed some boots also on the fender, and by so doing pushed Paul's skates too close to the fire. The disagreeable smell of burning leather soon made itself known; but Theodore, who had begun to read, paid no attention to it. A few minutes later Paul, on re-entering, dashed to the fire-place, and pounced upon the smoking skates. The straps were a good deal injured, indeed it was questionable whether they would hold. Unfortunately, Paul's temper this time got the better of him, and an unpleasant conversation ensued which was not stopped till Mrs. Everett, who entered the room, interfered.

“You are always in my way,” said Paul, angrily. “Whenever I am to have any enjoyment you always contrive to step in and make a mess of it.”

“Dear Paul, you should remember,” said Mrs. Everett, “that the Lord is mighty to turn even the greatest evil into good for those who love Him.”

This good word from the mother softened down the passion of her angry son, and he tendered his hand to Theodore.

"Never mind my cross words," he said; "I know you did not do it intentionally."

Frederic made his appearance, and off they dashed to Regent's Park to enjoy the exciting but perilous pleasures of winter.

Not two hours had elapsed when Paul came back. He was in a great hurry; the strap of his skate had broken, and he wanted to find another. There was a strap in the workshop which might be cut into shape for the purpose. It took him half an hour to cut it, and as soon as it was done off he went to the park again.

But what a sight met his eyes when he reached it! The ice had given way, and cries of agony and despair rose from that same spot where he had been amusing himself only an hour before.

Had his strap not broken, he himself might have been among the dead and drowning now!

Theodore had been his preserver. His mother's words proved a prophecy—"The Lord is mighty to turn even the greatest evil into good."

Frederic was found among the dead some days after; so Margaret is free again.

These were the facts which Mrs. Everett told me this morning, and she has furnished me with matter for at least ten sermons.

IN THE LAND OF WAES.

IF you wish to see a fine country not very far from home, I would advise you to take the steamer to Antwerp or Ostend, and spend a day in the Land of Waes. As little seems to be known about this district amongst us, I may tell you that it is that portion of Belgian Flanders which extends from Antwerp to Ghent on the left bank of the Scheldt. It is true that there are neither mountains nor valleys there; nor are there great forests. But if you are a tourist, you may, perhaps, be tired of the "Horns, Cols, and Pics" you have been scrambling up and down, and will be pleased with a smooth, well-constructed road, lined on both sides by poplars. On this road you may walk for miles without being once reminded of the truth that there is much "up-hill work" in this world of ours. Monotonous as the plain seems, it has its own peculiar beauties. I can quite understand the feeling of that good Hanoverian,

who, having spent six months between the charming hills of the Wupperthal, was one day driven, as if by some haunting spirit, to rush to the railway station, and take the express to Luneburg, which having reached, he placed himself on the top of a knoll at the entrance of the vast moor, known as the "Greatest Plain of Europe." He could no longer endure to have his vision confined within a radius of half-a-mile. He thought that the valley became every day narrower and narrower, and that the hills threatened to close in upon him and crush him to powder. "Allow me for one day 'to drink the plain,'" he said, "for I am choked with hills."

This Luneburg Moor is only a vast track of dull, swarthy-looking heath; but the Land of Waes is quite different. It well deserves its name—"The pleasure-garden of Belgium." If it be true, what all agriculturists except the Scotch admit, that Belgium is the best-cultivated country in the world, it is equally true that the Land of Waes is the most fertile and the best cultivated part of Belgium. It is not necessary to import manure, the soil being so abundantly productive. It seems as though Nature here wished to show how rich and variegated a carpet she can spread out where human zeal and skill weave the texture of it. Fields planted with rape-seed, potatoes, hemp, flax, lucerne, madder, hops, and tobacco, alternate with each other in the most charm-

ing variety. Nice-looking farmhouses rise everywhere behind the hedge-rows, which, if they do not yield the very best timber, furnish wood excellently adapted for fuel and agricultural purposes. Poverty and neglect seem almost unknown in this district, which, like the Land of Shinar, is a very garden of the Lord. A smile of contentment and happiness dwells constantly upon the faces both of master and labourer. And no wonder, for here there is plenty of bread to eat and of raiment to put on; and there is no taskmaster making the people sow with tears, and greedily trying to keep the joy of the harvest to himself.

“Well, what greatly surprises me,” I said to my only fellow-traveller in the railway-carriage that took us to Termonde, and who I had learnt was a Protestant, “is the fact that this prosperity, order, and cleanliness is found in a country so bigotedly Popish and priest-ridden as this is. We have been accustomed to think of Popery as inseparable from neglect and filth; but this district, in which I should suppose there are not a hundred Protestants, seems to give the lie direct to that supposition.”

“Ah, well,” he replied, “you see the independent character of the Netherlands, like that of the French, though in a greater degree, neutralizes the blighting influence which, but for that, Popery would certainly exercise here as well as elsewhere. The

Belgians have always been in advance of their German neighbours in intellectual development and freedom. They are of the same stock as the Dutch, with whom they have often formed one people; the Flemish language being almost the same as the Dutch. The love of liberty, order, and cleanliness, which characterizes the Hollanders is in a large measure shared by the Belgians. Of course you know that the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century, which turned the Dutch into a Protestant nation, originated in this country. Political reasons prevented the Belgians from following their Dutch brethren in throwing off the Popish yoke, but the great contest which for centuries was fought upon their soil, and the close connexion which has always been kept up between them and the Dutch, could not fail to bring to bear upon them the civilizing influences of Protestant ideas and manners. But in point of fact, it is perhaps hardly correct to say that the Belgians as a nation are bigoted Papists. It is only the female part of the population to which that unenviable title is at all applicable. It is the women upon whom the priests rely for support and influence. The males are mostly 'nothing-arians' or 'anything-arians,' as you like to put it. Provided the priest does not meddle with their political and social institutions, they allow him full liberty to make his religion as absurd, his church as splendid, and his

table as sumptuous as he can. Of course there are exceptions, especially among the lower class; but you will find these exceptions comparatively rare."

It was on a Friday evening in May that I arrived at Haexlo, a populous country place not far from Termonde. Much to my disappointment I could not manage on the following day to finish my business in time to catch the last train for Brussels, where I had hoped to attend service at the English Church. I was thus compelled to spend the Sunday in this village, where, so far as I could ascertain, there did not dwell a single Protestant. The prospect of staying all day at the inn, where I was a perfect stranger, was not very inviting, for though the house was good enough for a country tavern, and as clean as could be desired, it left me no other alternative but either to sit in the common tap-room or in my bed-room, a sort of prison-cell, on the first floor, facing the red-tiled roof of the adjoining house. The weather, however, being very fine, I hoped to spend most of the day out of doors. The place offered choice of beautiful walks, and though I am not at all an advocate for "worshipping God in the temple of nature" on Sunday, yet I thought that in the circumstances it was the best course I could follow, since there was no other temple near where I could worship so much in spirit and in truth.

In endeavouring, however, to draw out some plan for the Sunday, I was fortunately assisted by the gentleman, with whom I had done the largest part of my business. He was a well-to-do farmer, and drove a considerable trade in hemp: His house was one of the best in the village. Its front had all the appearance of a town-house, while at its rear there were all the outhouses for farming purposes. Mr. Gheelhans—for that was his name—on learning that I was to stay over the Sunday in the place, at once invited me to take up my quarters under his roof.

“Oh, dear,” he said, with that expression of *bon-hommie* which characterizes the Belgian country-people, “what can you do with yourself at the inn all day? You’ll feel like a cow in a brickfield, I should say, more especially as the house is as full as a bee-hive on Sundays.”

“What!—on Sunday?” I asked, in a tone of surprise.

“Yes, on Sunday,” he answered. “The whole house, and even the yard and garden, will be crowded with peasants, mostly young lads and girls, who drink, and sing, and dance, and play cards and billiards in the tap-room, while others enjoy nine-pins in the yard.”

“And when does this begin?” I asked.

“Well, at this season, whenever mass is over—as early as three or four o’clock in the afternoon. But the real fun begins at six or seven, when the girls

OF MERCY.

it goes on without pause till

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r stay with us. We have a
nd a good bed, and we'll try
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mily, which consisted of two
a boy of fourteen, assembled
om. There was an oblong
middle of the room, upon

which the breakfast was served. It was divided into two parts. On the lower end two tin japanned cans were placed, one filled with hot coffee and the other with hot milk. Cups, saucers, and plates and a loaf and rolls, surrounded these in regular order. I saw no butter, but a gigantic-looking china basin, filled to the brim with pieces of loaf sugar, stood in the centre. The upper end of the table was something like the bar of a refreshment room. It contained a tea-pot, a milk-pot, a sugar-pot, a large cup, steaks, chops, ham, eggs, sausages, bread, butter, some bottles of beer and of wine, two wine glasses and two tumblers, plates of radishes, salt, mustard, pepper, and vinegar, as well as knives and forks.

No sooner did I make my appearance than I was heartily welcomed by the family, who had evidently been waiting for me. My kind hostess cheerfully approached me, and tendered one hand for a morning greeting, while she held in the other a stocking at which she had been knitting. She was gorgeously dressed in her Sunday attire. A flourish of muslin interlaced with ribbons of bright red, covered her head and almost buried her face. Judging from its bulky appearance I thought this head-gear must have weighed between four and five pounds at least. She wore a sort of chintz jacket, with large yellow flowers, which would have made her conspicuous even at a mile's distance. A weighty gold cross, or I should

rather say a crucifix, hung suspended from her neck on a string of red coral beads. The fingers of both her hands were loaded with rings, most of them set with such large stones as must have represented a goodly sum of money if their value was anything like equal to their size. In keeping with these were a pair of long ruby ear-drops, which hung down almost as low as her chin. The two young ladies appeared to follow their mother's example in decorating themselves as gorgeously as they could. They, however, exhibited a little more of the town style. They wore no caps, and being children, their jewels seemed to be only the children of the larger ones which shone on their mother's hands.

I was kindly requested to take my seat at the upper end of the table, behind the steaks, chops, and bottles. The family took their seats at the lower end, near the tankards and the sugar basin, the husband seating himself next to his wife on one side, the daughters opposite them on the other. Aernout, the boy of fourteen, came and sat at the lowest end opposite to where I sat.

It appeared to me a strange custom thus to commit the direction of the table to the guest, and to honour him with the trouble of serving the host and his family. But remembering the proverb that a country's manners are a country's banners, I was just about to prepare myself for my unexpected task,

when I saw the ladies cross themselves, fold their hands, and bend down their heads in devotion. I was glad to notice this, as I was just pondering the question whether I should wait till the master of the family asked the blessing, or do so myself. The ladies anticipated me, however, and were praying before I could have broached the matter. I was just about to follow their example, when the master of the family addressed to me an observation to the effect that the weather promised to keep fine. Of course I gave no reply, but covering my face with my hand, offered up my thanks to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. When I had finished, the ladies still continued their devotions, which, however, my host seemed to take no notice of, as he repeated his former observation, adding the question whether we had such fine weather in England. Instead of answering I pointed to the ladies, expecting that this gesticulation would suffice to make him hold his peace for another minute. But having cast a look at them he turned to me, and said,

“Oh, never mind, sir; we won’t disturb them. They want to get through with it for the day, as we are going to have a drive after dinner.”

While he was saying this I saw the youngest daughter rise and open the door to a dog which was barking and scratching there, after which she walked back to her seat and resumed her devotional posture.

"They have to go through fifty *Pater Nosters* to-day," my host continued, "for an aunt who died twelve months ago, and it takes a little time to do that."

"Not fifty—sixty-two," his wife broke in, interrupting her devotions to resume them immediately.

"Well, let it be sixty-two; I really forgot," he said. "I had a good lot to pray too, but the chaplain has relieved me from the whole for seven francs."

Here the ladies crossed themselves and drew close to the table to begin eating.

"Well, ma'am, what may I offer you?" I asked my hostess as I took up knife and fork.

"Oh, thank you, sir, we only take *café au lait* and bread," she said courteously.

"But surely you don't expect me to eat all this?" I said, as I pointed to the chops and steaks, and ham and eggs.

"Ah, well, sir," she replied, "you are an Englishman, and Englishmen, I have been told, like substantial breakfasts."

"Oh, mother, we had almost forgotten one thing," said the eldest daughter, in a low distressed tone of voice,—*"fish!"*

"Send Machteld to the postmaster," Mrs Gheelhans whispered; "I know that he has got herrings."

"For pity's sake, please don't," I interrupted them, in a voice of despair.

I had to use all my eloquence before I succeeded

in making the kind people believe that there was any difference between the stomach of an Englishman and that of a boa constrictor. At length my host consented to assist me in cutting a way through the immense mountain of meat heaped up before me.

As we were doing scant justice to the repast, a noise was heard in the back part of the house. It was caused by the servants, who, as Mrs. Gheelhans told me, had just come back from the early morning-service, which commences at seven and is closed at half-past eight. These servants had done their church-going for the day, not being expected to appear at church again before next Sunday morning. They were now going to have their breakfast, and would then work till the dinner hour—12 o'clock. After that, those of them whose presence was not indispensable, would be at liberty to go out and enjoy themselves till the evening.

The 'chief service of the day commenced at half-past nine, and this the ladies and Aernout were to attend.

"I think Aernout had better stay at home this morning," said Mr. Gheelhans; "it would be pleasant were he to take our guest to the garden and show him the flowers, and then walk with him to the mill. You will enjoy that walk," he continued, turning to me. "It is one of the nicest spots hereabout."

"Poor little Aernout!" I could not help thinking.

"You will not lose much by being absent from that service, but walking and conversing about flowers and mills are not exactly the best means to teach you how to spend the Lord's day profitably. But after all it is better to worship in a Roman Catholic church than never to worship at all. Superstition is bad, but infidelity is worse."

"Permit me to decline your kind offer," I said, turning to my host. "I should rather not spend this portion of the day in walking. I propose to attend service this morning."

"So you are going with *us*?" Mrs. Gheelhans asked in joyful surprise.

"I beg your pardon," I replied; "there are important considerations which prevent me from getting much benefit from the service in your church. The first is that I do not understand the language very well"

"Oh, but our service is all singing," said the eldest daughter; "and we have a most beautiful organ."

"That may be quite true, but the hymns which are sung are all in Latin."

"Oh, the gentleman will perhaps enjoy the afternoon service better," said my hostess. "We'll have a sermon then; and our *pater* is a powerful preacher."

"Well, I have no objection to that," I said. "I shall be glad to learn what he tells you about the way of salvation."

"But how do you propose to spend the morning?" asked Mr. Gheelhans. "I am sorry I must leave you till dinner-time, as I must look after the cattle."

"I think I will spend this morning in my own church," I replied.

"But there is no Protestant church here," my friends cried all at once.

"Yes, there is," I said, with a smile; "you see it before you now."

The ladies looked at me with a puzzled, doubtful expression.

"It will be well that I explain myself," I continued. "My body is a temple, in which dwells a spirit; and that spirit is a priest of God. It worships God through the great High-priest and only Mediator, Jesus Christ, who is in heaven. Now, as this temple is not made of brick and mortar, but of flesh and blood, it is moveable; and I will take it into my bedroom, and there send up the incense of my prayer and praise."

"Oh, I see; the gentleman wants to be alone to pray," said my host. "Very well, sir; at dinner I shall hope to see you again."

He rose to go; and while the women were preparing themselves for church, I repaired to my bedroom.

Finding myself alone, I could not help feeling sad. There was much in these kind, simple-hearted people that touched the chords of affection within

me. We had spent a short time together, like one family, in closest amity, till the moment when He who is the Fountain of Love itself became the subject of conversation; and here, exactly where we should have been knit in closer bonds, we parted, turning our backs upon one another to walk each of us in a different direction. And yet they professed to worship no other God but Him whom I worshipped! They acknowledged the same crucified Christ to be the head of the Church that I did! "Where, then, did the cause of separation lie?" I asked myself. The answer was, "In that evil spirit which at all times has sown discord between those who were originally united in God, by 'teaching them for doctrines the commandments of men.' Much of the good which God has done through revelation the devil knows how to spoil through tradition."

After dinner, my host's neatly-painted pleasure-car, drawn by two fine horses, drew up at the front door to take the family out for a drive. Mr. Gheelhans himself was to be coachman. I felt at a loss for a moment what to do. If I refused to join the party, I should cause them great disappointment, if they did not even take it as a positive unkindness.

Most likely they would not permit me to remain behind alone; and thus I should either oblige them to give up the drive altogether, or cause one of them to stay with me. But I felt reluctant to do a thing

which in my opinion was not right, merely to please others. After some serious reflection I resolved to refuse, painful as it was to my feelings. I remembered that offence is given to the seriously-minded at home by so many of our fellow-countrymen when abroad, either from want of conscience or from want of courage, desecrating the day which they strive to keep holy at home. I believe that I should not be justified if I increased their number; so I gently took my host aside, and explained to him how I viewed matters. Much to my surprise, he at once consented to leave me behind.

"You are right," he said, in a tone of apology. "I did not think of that. Englishmen never drive out on Sunday. I am sorry it did not occur to me sooner, else I should have kept my servant at home to drive the women out, and I should have taken a walk with you. But we shall come back soon, and you will meantime find plenty to interest you in the garden, as you are fond of flowers."

I followed his hint, and was still in the garden when, little more than an hour having elapsed, the party came back.

"Enjoyed yourself?" asked my host, as he saw me looking at a bed of most beautiful roses.

"Perfectly, thank you."

"You see, this is a free country. Nobody is compelled to do anything against his conscience. Every-

body is allowed to worship God in his own way. That has always been my principle. A year or two ago a German merchant with whom I did a deal of business happened to stay a day with me just as you are doing now—my house being an ‘omnibus’ for all my friends, you know. The Gheelhanses have always been known for their hospitality, and my maxim, like that of my father’s, is that he who is not hospitable is hardly a human being. Well, but to come to the point, my German friend was a Jew, and I had forgotten that Jews don’t eat pork. Now, unfortunately, my wife had just cooked a dinner composed of saurcrout with bacon, and cut beans with pork sausages; for we had just killed a fat pig, and this was to be the first family repast after it. My friend at first refused to partake of it, and I at once ordered something else to be brought up for him. But unhappily we had nothing but cold ham, which, of course, was equally unsuitable. So nothing was left but to give him a piece of bread and some eggs. He looked a little sourly at it, for the flavour of our meats played into his nostrils, and it was evidently a hard matter for him to eat one thing while he smelt something better. ‘Ah, well,’ he said, pushing the bread aside, ‘I see I cannot keep the law this one time. I have broken it already, for the pork has entered my stomach through my nostrils. So I may just let the rest follow by the throat.’

Saying this, he grasped knife and fork and soon got ahead of us in the breach he made in the saurcrout that steamed before him. Of course we all enjoyed it. 'I suppose you will have to pay a good many dollars to your rabbi for that meal?' I said to him after dinner. — 'Not at all,' he said; 'we make up for such slips on the great day of atonement, which comes on in October. Then we fast for twenty-four hours without taking so much as a crumb of bread or a drop of water.' I could not help thinking that this was still harder than paying. But remembering the circumstance afterwards, I said to myself, 'After all, it was not right; a man should keep his conscience clear.' Therefore, I cannot but give you great praise, sir, because you kept faithfully to your principles. As we drove off, I said to my wife, 'That Englishman is worth ten Jews now.' "

"Thank you," I answered, "but permit me to ask, how many Jews you think you are worth yourself?"

"Ah, well," he replied with a smile; "I don't know. Perhaps you do."

"I am afraid that you are not worth more than one," I said. "At least so it appeared to me when this morning at breakfast you were yourself guilty of the same offence as the Jew committed at your dinner-table. For, if I am right, you believe it to be your duty to pray for the soul of your deceased sister. Your wife and daughters faithfully performed that

supposed duty, and though I do not believe God has anywhere commanded them to do so, yet I looked upon their praying with a certain respect, because I regarded it as an act of conscience on their part. But you, on the contrary, appeared to regard yourself as exempt from the obligation of doing your duty, for you did not pray at all."

"Ah, well," he broke in, "but I paid for it, you know."

"Very well, but the Jew would do the same in October, on the day of atonement. He paid in abstinence just as you have paid in francs. How then could you fairly find fault with him, since he was doing the very same thing as you? I have no such home-made payments at my disposal. That's the reason why I refused to do what would defile my conscience. If I could have thought, 'Well, I will pay a couple of francs to the priest, and that will put all right again,' I should at once have taken my seat in your carriage. What made me shrink from doing so was the consciousness that I was not in the possession of anything, however valuable, that was sufficient to make up for the sin I was being tempted to commit. I cannot see how a man can keep his conscience clear, if he believes in the efficacy of such make-ups."

"Well, but there *must* be such things," he answered. "We cannot possibly keep from going astray sometimes. Do you never make a slip yourself?"

"Certainly I do. Too many of them, alas! But I know of no other fountain that can cleanse my conscience from the impurity of sin but the blood of Jesus Christ. When I commit an offence, I have no rest till I have confessed to Him, and through faith received the assurance that He has forgiven me, and washed it away in His blood."

"Oh, that's a cheap way of getting rid of the difficulty," he cried, somewhat sarcastically.

"So it is," I answered. "It is what the Apostle calls 'salvation by *grace*.' It costs us nothing. It is all paid for by the sufferings, the blood, and the death of Him who loved us. But it is exactly this which makes me look upon sin as an exceedingly evil thing. Its removal cannot be bought for a few francs, nor for all the silver and gold in the world; it requires the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. And this it is, my dear friend, that makes me stop and consider."

I was glad to observe that my exposition of the moral and sanctifying power of cordial faith in the blood of Christ made some impression upon the mind of my host. At least he again broached the subject in the evening when we were all together at supper. A lively but friendly conversation ensued, in which certainly the ladies tried hard to defend the doctrines of their church, but this only enabled me to bring before them some important truths which they had

never heard till now. As I had, of course, often appealed to the authority of Scripture, my host requested me to sell him the book. I promised to send him a copy from Brussels.

“Don’t forget it,” he said.

And next morning, after having been repeatedly urged by my kind hostess to come back again and spend a long time with them, my host cried as I drove off, “Pray don’t forget to send the book.”

THE HELMSVALE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

“**W**ILLIE, aren't you away yet?” said my wife as she entered the garden one Sunday afternoon to my little nephew, a boy of twelve, who lay on the grass playing with the dog. My sister lived only a short distance from our house, and Willie often spent his Sunday afternoons with us, because he liked our garden, which was about three times bigger than his mother's.

“Oh, I've got plenty of time yet,” he answered, peevishly.

“It is past three,” my wife observed.

“Yes, but school does not begin till the quarter past,” was the answer.

“Even supposing, it is time you were off. You'll find the chapel locked if you don't make haste.”

“If that's the case, then I'll trot back.”

“Now, Willie, I say, that's not right. You know how much you displease mamma by staying away

from school. You weren't there last Sunday, were you?"

He got up to his feet rather slowly. "Ah, bother the school!" he muttered, as he strode off.

"What a trouble it is to get that boy to go to school!" my wife said to me as she re-entered the house.

"I suspect it's the same with them all," I replied. "And I doubt whether, if you were among the number, you would go without some trouble."

"Well, I don't know," she answered with a smile. "I confess that when I was a girl of twelve I did not step with enthusiasm into our dark, chilly school-room on Sunday afternoons when the sun was shining, the birds chirping and singing in the trees, and the fields teeming with flowers."

"Of course not. And I wonder whether even Richard Draper, Helen Aikman, Lizzie Henderson, and the other teachers, are in ecstasies when they are shut up with a lot of restless children in a dull church, to hear their lessons mumbled, and give them bits of sermons which they don't care to listen to."

"Well," my wife said, with a sigh, "I believe they are doing the work for conscience' sake; they wish to do some good to the children. But whether they are doing it with pleasure, I cannot tell. I am sometimes inclined to think not."

"They do not seem to have the gift of attracting

the children, at all events. Were you to go into the fields at this moment, you would see the roads crowded, and if you were then to peep into the school, I am afraid you would find it almost empty."

"But you know it is hard work to compete with the flowers and the green fields on a sunny summer afternoon like this," answered my wife.

"Granted; but are matters much better in winter?" I asked. "To tell the truth, the children don't *like* the class: and it's neither the weather nor the building that is to blame, but the teachers. At least, that's *my* opinion."

"I fear you are right," she said. "I remember that I did not like the class, and tried to find pretexts for staying away, till Miss Rowley became our teacher. Her class was always crowded. We actually longed for the hour. The weather might be ever so bright and beautiful, but it never tempted us to stay away. It was a perfect treat to sit and listen to her. And dull and dark as the school was, we were always sorry when the time was up. She might have kept us for three hours if she had wished, without the slightest difficulty."

"And how do you account for that?" I asked.

"I can't exactly say: I think it was the easy, pleasant way in which she could tell us Bible stories, and the exhaustless stock of anecdotes and illustrations she had at command. There was also some-

thing about her person which attracted and pleased us. Not that we did not like the other teachers. They were all good, kind-hearted people. But Miss Rowley knew how to be like a child with children, and at the same time how to preserve her authority. There was nothing of the catechist in her behaviour, and nothing of the sermon in her teaching. But I do not know how it was, she did not stay long. I believe the other teachers did not get on very well with her. She wanted to introduce new arrangements, which they were opposed to."

"I can quite understand that," I said. "The gift of teaching children is a special one—a talent by itself. It seems to be something innate. Of course, practice and training may go a considerable way in developing and improving the talent, but if a person has got nothing of it by nature, he will hardly become a good teacher merely by practice. When I think of the class of teachers who are at present engaged in our church, I really do not wonder that the children can hardly be got to attend. It is true they are kind-hearted and well-meaning young people, but I do not know one among them whom I should imagine to be possessed of that peculiar something which children are so fond of in a teacher. Now take, for instance, Richard Draper. He—"

"Oh, Richard Draper!" my wife broke in. "I could scarcely believe my ears when I first heard that

he was going to take a class. Why, you know, we never used to look upon Richard as being at all a seriously-minded young man. It is true, he attended church regularly, as almost everybody does, but that was all. During the week he was never seen with religious people or at religious meetings. He used to spend most of his evenings at cards or at the billiard-table. All at once it was mooted that he was paying his addresses to Lucy Eversham. Some said he did it for her money's sake, and others because his father and her father had agreed upon the match. At all events, since Lucy is a religious girl, nobody wondered that Richard should begin to attend the same meetings as she went to, and that as she is a Sunday-school teacher, he should take a class."

"I did not know these were the circumstances under which he became a teacher," I said. "But it only makes me wonder the less at the children not crowding to his class. Card-playing and billiards are not the best preparations a young man can have for being a Sunday-school teacher. Then, take Lizzie Henderson. She is a very ignorant person! I wonder whether she knows a whit more of Bible history than the children she teaches."

"I am almost certain she does not," my wife replied. "I have been told by Miss Loughton, who sometimes meets her in society, that on one occasion it came out that she did not know who the first king

of Israel was, and that she was highly astonished to learn that Isaiah was not one of the Jewish judges. But she was made a teacher against the grain, poor thing. Her class was originally taught by her cousin, Miss Walker. She, however, soon got tired of it; and as she did not like to be bound every Sunday, she prevailed upon her mother to urge Lizzie to take her place. Now, you know, Lizzie is an orphan, and entirely dependent upon Mrs. Walker's benevolence, so there was nothing left for her but to submit."

"And this is the way our staff of Sunday-school teachers is kept up!" I said. "There is Mr. Snelgrove, too, one of the oldest of them. He continued to teach his class even after he was married. He is a very zealous and serious-minded man, no doubt. But then he is such a dry, abrupt sort of a fellow! The words seem to freeze in his throat. I have sometimes got into conversation with him going up to town; but, I confess, I am always glad when we reach the terminus."

"He is a good man," said my wife. "I do not believe there is a Sunday-school teacher in the kingdom who is more heartily concerned about the true welfare of the souls of the children. I know he never goes to the class without carefully preparing himself by reading and prayer. But somehow he cannot be brought to see that a Sunday-school is not a prayer-meeting. Half the time is taken up by two long

prayers—one at the commencement and another at the close; and the greater part of the remainder is devoted to an elaborate address, in fact a regular sermon, on various doctrines—such as sanctification, justification by faith, the nature and attributes of God, and the imputed righteousness of Christ. Mrs. Fairbairn told me the other day that she attended his class one Sunday. She had to strain all her mental powers to follow him in his discourse. All he said was sound scriptural doctrine; but she did not see a single child who was attending to what he said. Some slept, some talked, some whispered with their neighbours, while others played with their hymn-books, their caps, or their handkerchiefs. Nor could she wonder at this. She would rather have wondered had she found them attentive, for she was quite certain that good Mr. Snelgrove did not utter one sentence which was level to the mental capacity of the little ones.”

“That is just what I expected,” I said; “I never doubted for one moment the good intentions of Mr. Snelgrove, and I believe the same may be said of all the other teachers. But a good intention is not the only requisite for doing a thing well. It is this conviction which has kept me from taking a class. I should be most happy if, for an hour every Sunday, I could keep the children from rambling about by engaging their minds in religious things, but I know I have not got the talent for it. Had this not been

the case, I should long since have adapted the large room at the works for the purpose."

"Well, but if you are willing to give the room," my wife said, "perhaps some one may be found who has the necessary talent."

"Perhaps; but I do not know any one."

"We'll see," she said, in a thoughtful voice. "I shall speak to Mrs. Fairbairn about it. She knows the people of this place better than any one else."

Scarcely a fortnight had elapsed after this conversation took place, when one Saturday afternoon at tea my wife told me that she had heard of a person such as we were anxious to procure.

"But," she added, "you cannot get him for your school, because he has one of his own. His name is Heath. He came to the town only a few months ago, as book-keeper to Mr. Colethorpe, the timber merchant."

"And how do you know about him?" I asked.

"Through Mrs. Fairbairn. I told her of your plan about the large room, and asked if she knew a fit person; but she did not know any one. This morning, however, she called, and told me that her charwoman's boy was attending a class in Brook Street, which the children seemed to like very much. 'At least,' says the woman, 'my little Dick cannot be got to stay away from it. He longs for the Sunday class as if he were going on some holiday excursion.' So

Mrs. Fairbairn called on Mr. Heath last night, and he gladly gave her permission to visit the school with some friends. So we shall go to-morrow, and you will see for yourself."

We went accordingly. The room in which we found ourselves was separated from Mr. Heath's house by a pretty large garden, and seemed to have been used in former times for some industrial purpose. It was a large apartment facing a back street, chiefly inhabited by working people. It had also an entrance from the garden. There were fifty children in it, seated on forms, and divided into two classes. The classes were separated from each other by a passage or aisle which divided the room. On one side were children under eight, and on the other children above that age. A few looked as old as fourteen. At the end of the room was a platform, on which a desk was placed, and behind it Mr. Heath stood. His daughter, a young lady of eighteen, took her place by the side of the platform near to the little ones, while the space on the other side of the platform was occupied by ourselves; so that we were near the elder children.

Mr. Heath opened the proceedings with a very short prayer, and then a hymn was sung.

"Now," he said, "let us hear whether you have kept hold of what you learnt last Sunday. Tell me, if you please, what it was."

"The Ten Commandments," several voices immediately answered.

"The first half hour we devote to learning by heart," Mr. Heath said, turning to me. "We have spent four Sundays in learning the Ten Commandments. I wrote them down in this little book. Here you see the order in which we recite them."

I saw the Ten Commandments divided into small sentences, in this way:—

" I am the Lord thy God,
Which have brought thee
Out of the land of Egypt,
Out of the house of bondage."

The first commandment—

" Thou shalt have
No other gods
Before Me."

The second commandment—

" Thou shalt not make
Unto thee
Any graven image," etc.

On another page I found the Lord's Prayer broken up into short sentences in the same way; and on another what is called the Apostles' Creed. I also saw that Mr. Heath had begun to write down the 103d Psalm in the same manner.

On a given sign from Mr. Heath all the children rose. He then said the first line, "I am the Lord thy God," to give the measure, which at the same

time he beat with his hand. And now the children started off in the same track, reciting sentence after sentence, and allowing a moment's pause between each. The pause between each commandment was longer, being marked by four beats. The whole law was thus said by all the children without the slightest confusion, and so distinctly was it articulated, that it seemed as though it had been said by one person only. They evidently liked it very much. Every child was on the alert to keep pace with the whole company. On the side of the little ones there was, of course, now and then a little bit of confusion, which, however, was soon put right by Miss Heath, who set the stray ones on the right track again by beating the measure with both her hands, and reciting the sentence to them with a loud voice. This confusion, Mr. Heath told me, was owing to a few new-comers who had not been present before.

After this a verse was sung, and the Lord's Prayer was said in the same way.

"We always repeat what we have learnt on former occasions," Mr. Heath said to me. "Repetition is the thing, sir. All instruction is fruitless unless there is constant repetition."

"And what have the children learnt by heart in this way?" I asked.

"During the three months I have kept this school they have learnt the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Com-

mandments, and the Apostles' Creed. We are now going to learn a few portions of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount."

Mr. Heath then repeated the first sentence: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." He said it three times successively, articulating very distinctly, and beating the time to every word that required an accent. It was repeated by the children, first with a little confusion, but at the third repetition they had got it quite correctly. Then the next sentence was proceeded with: "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When they knew this also, the two sentences were taken together. The following verse was then added: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." This was enough for the day. Having looked at the clock on the wall, I found that it took the children less than ten minutes to learn these two verses by heart.

"Do you give them any texts or hymns to be learnt at home?" I asked.

"No; I have never done that," was the answer. "I have found that many of them learn the texts so incorrectly as to make nonsense of them. But even when they do learn them correctly, they gabble them so rapidly and monotonously, that one can scarcely make out what language they are talking in. This has led me to take the matter into my own hand, and to make them learn their texts and hymns under my own superintendence."

I could not help acknowledging the correctness of these remarks. And what struck me especially was the reverential tone in which Mr. Heath taught the children to say these portions of Scripture.

A verse of a hymn having been sung, Mr. Heath allowed a pause of between five and ten minutes, during which the children were allowed to talk with one another; Miss Heath taking care that order was not altogether lost.

"They ought to have a moment to let off their superfluous steam," Mr. Heath said to me with a smile. "There is nothing I hate more than talking and playing while instruction is being given. This is the reason why I never engage myself with only a single child, leaving the rest unoccupied. All my teaching is given to the whole school."

The pause over, Mr. Heath took a long stick and placed himself beside a large map of the world after Mercator's projection. Moved as it were by an electric shock, the children at once stopped their humming. From the readiness with which they evidently made themselves "all ear," and the expression of pleasure upon their faces, it was clear that something was coming which they all liked.

"We are now going to have a bit of Biblical Geography," Mr. Heath said to me. "If we don't have a clear idea of the places where the events have happened, neither can we have a clear idea of the

events themselves. Correct geography," he added, with a smile, "is, in my opinion, an essential part of sound theology."

"Well," he said to the children, "to what famous place are we going to travel to-day?"

"To Jerusalem," was the unanimous reply.

"Very well. Then where are we to start from?"

"From London."

"Of course, that is the nearest port, and the best place for us to get a steamer."

We were now all put on board a steamer, and made to sail down the Thames, Mr. Heath tracing out the course with his stick. But no sooner had we got into the Channel than a tremendous storm arose. A large picture held up by Miss Heath showed the fearful danger in which our vessel was. Happily we escaped by putting in at Brest, of which another picture gave us some slight idea. We took a walk through the place, and were told to what country it belonged, and what the name of its present sovereign was. We thereupon pursued our voyage, but unfortunately something went wrong with the engine, which compelled us to sail to Lisbon. Here Miss Heath, by one of her pictures, gave us a sight of the town, and how it looked after the fearful earthquake, and how the Portuguese country people were dressed. And so we got to Gibraltar, and to Malta, where Paul landed after his shipwreck; and to Alexandria: and having

taken a bath in the Nile, and climbed the Pyramids, we took camels and mules, and travelled through the desert, on the track of the children of Israel, into Jerusalem.

I need not say that the children, from the smallest to the greatest, listened with breathless attention to this narrative of their imaginary voyage; nor could it be doubtful as to whether they had a distinct notion of the direction in which the Holy Land was situated, and of the countries that surrounded it.

Mr. Heath now allowed the children another pause, after which he closed by telling them a story from the Bible. Here the father and daughter divided the labour. Mr. Heath told the elder children the story of our Lord's feeding the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, while Miss Heath told her class the story of Abraham's journey to sacrifice his son Isaac. Both spoke in such a low voice that they did not interfere with each other, and yet so distinctly as to be understood by those whom they addressed. I soon discovered the reason of this division. Miss Heath spoke to the little ones in quite a childlike style, whereas her father interspersed his narrative with various questions and remarks, which were more adapted to the capacity of elder children.

"I wish we had a teacher like Mr. Heath," I said as we returned home; "our room would very soon be turned to use."

"Let us be on the look-out," my wife answered; "I believe there must be some one amongst our people who would be able to do the same if he only saw how Mr. Heath does."

A few weeks after I found myself one evening in the company of a few friends. The unsatisfactory condition of the juvenile population of the place became the topic of the conversation. There were general complaints that the Sunday was ill-spent by the greater portion of them. I gave a description of what I had witnessed at Mr. Heath's school, and the wish was expressed by all who were present, that more such institutions should be established. I said that I should be too happy to give my large room for the purpose, but that I had in vain been looking out for a fit teacher.

The next evening Mr. Gough, a clerk in the service of one of the friends above mentioned, called at my house. I knew Mr. Gough slightly. We occasionally passed each other, as he lived close by. I always liked his look. He was a perfect gentleman, and I new that his intellect was in keeping with his outward appearance. He sometimes gave lectures to the Young Men's Association on historical subjects, and on missions, which, as I had heard, were much liked. His master had told him what I had said about Mr. Heath and my large room. He expressed a desire to see Mr. Heath's school, and

asked me to give him an introduction. The consequence of this conversation was that Mr. Gough visited Mr. Heath's school on the following Sunday, and continued to do so for several successive Sundays.

"I think I know a little about it now," he said to me one day; "and if it is not inconvenient to you, sir, I should be grateful if you would allow me to make the experiment in your room."

No request could have been more welcome to me. A platform, desk, and forms were soon ready. My wife gave five pounds for maps and pictures. Miss Berkeley, a sister of Mr. Gough's wife, who had also attended Mr. Heath's school, was to be his assistant.

Mr. Gough proved a perfect disciple of Mr. Heath. It was not long before there were more children than the room was capable of accommodating. They numbered between sixty and seventy. And with what delight they made their appearance! It was a great pity, but we were compelled to refuse nearly as many as had been admitted. We commenced at half-past two, and closed at four. But the children were always sorry when the time was up, and often besought Mr. Gough for an additional half hour.

And nobody was more pleased with our school than Mr. Heath. Mr. Gough's success impelled him to try to get young men whom he might train as Sunday-school teachers. He soon got one who proved excellently fit for the work. This enabled

him one Sunday to visit our school, while his own was kept by his assistant.

"I am very glad you have come," said Mr. Gough; "you can help me beautifully. We are going to build the temple of Solomon to-day."

Indeed there were all the parts of the temple, some cut out in pasteboard and some in wood; two hundred pieces, large and small, some pasted with gilt paper, and some painted so as to resemble stones; and there were the altars, and the molten sea, and the seven candlesticks, and the ark of the covenant; in short, everything that was necessary to represent the complete building. And every piece was numbered so as to indicate its exact place, according to a plan drawn by Mr. Gough, and suspended on the wall.

It took fully two hours before the whole of the structure was put up. Of course on this occasion the repetition of the texts and hymns was suspended. The children were permitted to indulge the luxury of seeing the building rise inch by inch and assume more and more the form of a magnificent temple, till at length it stood before their amazed eyes in all its splendour. Each time, however, when a certain portion of it was completed, Mr. Gough told them what it was, and the purpose it was meant to serve.

This "temple-building" pleased the children so much that it became a means of rewarding their assiduity and attention. At the close of the half-

year, when it was shown that they knew their lessons well, a Sunday was appointed on which the temple should be built.

Of course Mr. Heath very soon had a temple also, after the model of Mr. Gough's. Mr. Gough spent many evenings at his house helping him to make it; and it was not long before a model was made of the tabernacle of Moses in the same way. We were all invited to the first exhibition, Mr. Heath's assistant taking Mr. Gough's place for the day. It was a treat to witness the delight of the children; and while Messrs. Heath and Gough built the tabernacle and addressed the children, the ladies served tea and buns.

Thus a kind of pleasing, and I should almost say, holy emulation arose between the schools, the one rejoicing when the other had contrived something new that could contribute towards the happiness of both.

Mr. Reddington, one of Mr. Heath's assistants, is now about to start a third school, some friends having given the building.

I hope the day is not distant when we shall see every district provided with such a school. The effect of our two schools is already noticeable. Children who used to be seen rambling and playing in the street on Sundays are not seen there any more, and during morning and evening service our gallery shows many happy little faces, which formerly were never seen in any church or chapel.

“JUST SUPPOSE:”

THOUGHTS AT AN OPEN WINDOW.

I FIND I have mistaken the hour at which I was to meet a benevolent friend, who was to accompany me on a round of visits among the poor; and am seated at the window of a house in Cheapside, looking attentively at the bustling crowd below, as it wheels and whirls up and down the thronged thoroughfare. It is a constant ebb and flow of life, in which each individual appears to be but a drop in a restless tide, flowing away never to be seen again, to be for ever dissolved in that vast ocean called London.

Yet, when one thinks of it, man is anything save a drop to be lost in the great “All.” Of the countless multitudes who walk or drive past, each person is possessed of a soul infinitely more valuable than all the riches of London taken together. And, moreover,

each soul has its own history, which is of far more importance than that of the wealthiest bank or the mightiest mercantile house. Just suppose that the man, standing at yonder corner absorbed in his own thoughts, has this very moment gained the victory over a terrible temptation, and has resolved to drop some evil design he was about to carry out. Is there in the history of any of the firms that cluster round the Bank and the Exchange anything comparable in importance with the blessed change that has taken place in this man's soul, causing angels to rejoice? People move to and fro as if they were but walking automaton, hurrying onward, like railway carriages, to their respective termini! But God knows what is going on in the inner chambers of each heart, fraught with its own hopes and fears, joys and affections. I can only see the several envelopes, so to speak, and from their appearance I should infer that the contents of the letters must likewise be such—weighty or indifferent, joyful or distressing, badly written or the reverse—just as the envelope bears; and of many an envelope I should scarcely suppose that it contained any letter at all. But in that I may be grossly mistaken. Yonder is a woman, for instance, who seems to me to walk on in perfect thoughtlessness. Yet at this very moment she may be lifting up her heart to God, as Hannah did when Eli took her prayer for a sign of intoxication. And yonder greyheaded old

gentleman, who steps on as smartly as though he were still a young man—he is undoubtedly engaged in thinking upon some important scheme, which engrosses his whole mind, and drives him on with brisk step to the place where he hopes it will be realized. But it may be the very contrary. Perhaps he is an old fool, an inveterate idler, an epicure, who only walks fast that he may not miss the hot joint which he knows will be up at half-past one. Who can tell from the outside what may be within? Outwardly, all is dull, mechanical, lifeless—a collection of magic lantern slides, moved by some invisible hand, or by some clock-work; inwardly there is nothing but life and motion, thought and feeling, plan and purpose, each individual being a world in itself, the history of which ends not with time.

And who can trace the links that connect events with events, causes with effects, effects with consequences? My eye, at this moment, chances to fall upon a boy gazing away his time at the window of yonder picture shop. Perhaps that little loiterer is making himself the cause of a most distressing calamity, that months hence will be felt in all its painfulness on the other side of the globe—in China or in Australia. It is true that it is both sinful and foolish to look upon ourselves as important persons, without whom the world could hardly get on. But there is also a sense in which no man can overrate

his importance. God has created each of us for some work for which we are specially fitted. If we neglect to do it, evil is sure to happen somewhere, and though the work we neglect may in itself be very menial or insignificant, yet the wrong caused by our neglect of it may have the most serious consequences. It is not my person which is so important—for whole nations are nothing more than a drop of the bucket and the small dust of the balance—but the place which it has pleased God in his providence to assign to me; it is the fact that my work stands in direct connection with the aggregate work upon which the welfare of society depends. We should, therefore, be as conscientious in performing our duty as though our work were the most important under heaven. For such it is, perhaps. We may not know it. Who can tell which work, at any given time, may be most important? At this moment it is perhaps the work that little boy appears to neglect. By being five minutes late, he may cause certain persons not to meet, whose combined labour would have supplied hundreds or thousands of ignorant souls with the knowledge of Christ. Truly, whatever our work may be, we should be conscientious in looking upon ourselves as fellow-workers with God. He expects us to do our work as He does his. He reckons upon it. It is true that if we neglect it, He is mighty to neutralize the evil effects of our neglect, or even, in His mysterious

scheme, to utilize the very mischief we have caused. But still, our neglect must deeply grieve Him. Therefore it is that He will let us feel in our conscience, on the great day of account, that we have sadly aggravated our responsibility. We should not play with our work, neither make light with what appears to us the trifling parts of it. We do not know how much may depend upon mere trifles. And if we cannot always see the necessity or the usefulness of the work, neither can we estimate the great mischief certain to ensue if we fail to do it. Take, for instance, that policeman at the corner. I have watched him now for nearly two hours, and all I have seen him do was to pace up and down the pavement, stopping for a moment, now here, now there, and talking now and then with an acquaintance or a comrade. He seemed to me the living image of idleness, and one might well feel inclined to ask, "What in all the world is the use of that laggard being there?" But the right answer to that question might be to ask another—"What might be the consequence if that man were not there?" Not a few persons, from the nature of their vocation, confer a boon upon society merely by their not being absent. And many are useful merely by filling their places, because by doing so they prevent its being occupied by others less able to occupy it faithfully.

There was a block for a few minutes in the train of cabs, carts, and omnibuses just now. Right before

my window an omnibus stopped, on the top of which was only one passenger; and there was small wonder he had no companions. The weather was rough and cold, and ever and anon a gush of sleet and hail came biting and stinging down. I therefore could not help wondering why this man had taken up such an inhospitable position. I saw there was room enough for him inside, and he looked anything but robust. He seemed about forty, and was of gentlemanly appearance. I judged he was a clerk in a mercantile house. He looked delicate, and it was not difficult to see that the cold, damp atmosphere was telling upon his system. Very soon, however, I found out the reason for his strange predilection. He was a smoker, and had evidently sacrificed all the comforts of the well-cushioned seat inside to the luxuries of his pipe. Now I am not a smoker, and I would be the last man in the world to write an encomium upon what is, in my opinion, a very injurious habit. But there are thousands of people, and among them most intelligent, good, and pious persons, who do not hold that opinion, but look upon smoking as harmless and innocent. So if I abstain from anything like dogmatism, and gladly allow them the liberty which I claim for myself—that of acting according to their conviction—I shall surely not be suspected of playing with conscience. I did not, therefore, find fault with this man's availing himself of the opportunity a journey, probably all the

way up from Hammersmith, afforded him of treating himself to his pet dainty. But it appeared to me that he was to be blamed for indulging in such an enjoyment at the risk of injuring his health. Just suppose that he is the head of a family, which depends upon him for its support; and suppose that, owing to this imprudence, he should catch a cold ultimately causing premature death, what may the consequences be? I can picture to myself his wife and children reduced from a state of comparative comfort to pinching poverty; the children not yet being old enough to earn anything. The mother, who as a girl had got an education too high for a servant, and yet too low for a lady, finds herself unable to earn even a couple of shillings a week by sewing. The workhouse soon receives them. Here the children get into the worst company. The boys turn vagabonds and thieves; the girls become bad. The poor mother dies from grief and exhaustion. Now all this misery would, humanly speaking, have been prevented had the father lived ten or fifteen years longer. His family's distressing ruin was caused by his premature death; this was caused by his disease; his disease by his sitting outside an omnibus; and his sitting outside on a snowy day by his love of a pipe. What a trifling cause to produce such a frightful result! Are we really to believe that in eternity this man's children, if asked what brought them into the place of pain, would be

justified in saying, "Our father's love of a pipe?" Undoubtedly, in a certain sense, they would. Not that they were not the first causes of their own perdition. Had they listened to the voice of conscience, and to many warnings, their father's imprudence could never have locked the gate of heaven upon them. But it cannot be denied that his want of caution deprived them of many privileges which would have made it easier for them to have avoided the way to hell. That the comforts and blessings of an orderly, respectable family life form a powerful barrier against the temptations to which the poor and the pauper are peculiarly subject, needs no argument in its support. Of that barrier our friend on the top of the omnibus deprived his family by his inconsiderate self-indulgence. His smoking, which in other circumstances might have been an innocent recreation, now appears as a *sin* and a *gross* misconduct. A head of a family certainly neglects his duty, and is guilty of a great offence against the law of love, if he forgets that his health and his life are not his own, but belong also to his wife and children. He ought to bear in mind that their happiness and welfare both for time and for eternity depend too much upon his length of life to admit of his playing with himself as though he were but a child. And yet who among us is always alive to this responsibility? How little do we realize the truth that in all the circumstances of our daily life, even the

most trifling and insignificant, the grave momentous question, "Am I faithful in the calling wherewith God has called me?" should continually be before our mind! What is easier than to hail an omnibus, scramble up the box, and light a pipe, and puff away? You would cause yourself to be looked upon as half cracked were you to say that such commonplace actions may stand in direct connection with the most important questions of the Christian ethics. Yet nothing could be easier proved. We should here carefully apply the Apostle's injunction, "Pray without ceasing," for we do not know where our enemy may be lurking, and where the first link may be fastened of that chain, which, if not broken in time, will certainly drag us down into the abyss.

Look at that cabby, whose face looks as if it had been cut out of a red cabbage. Just suppose that man were to drop down dead from his box. What would be the consequences? Why, of course a crowd would gather. The body would be placed in the cab, and conveyed to the hospital. A coroner's inquest would be held, and there would be a *post mortem* examination, the verdict of the jury being that James Jones died from paralysis, or from heart disease. Finally there would be a burial with all the decent solemnities his relatives could afford. That would be all; and soon the shocking accident would be no more talked of; everybody would forget all about the cabby,

who on a December morning dropped down dead in Cheapside. People would hurriedly move up and down Cheapside as if the thing had never happened, and nobody think it had any consequences at all.

Still it might have consequences more important than any one of us would at first believe. Suppose our cabman has an aged mother, whom he dearly loves, and to whose support and comfort he has devoted his life. Suppose that for her sake he had refused to go to Australia, where a lucrative situation was offered him; or that it was for his mother's sake he had never asked fair Annie's hand, although he could never dismiss her image from his mind. I fancy the good old woman energetically poking the fire to make the snug little room look cheerful and comfortable. She makes the tea as usual, and has a chop ready, and she sits down at the fireside, and patiently waits for her darling, whom she has not seen since he left early this morning. But it grows late—very late—and she fancies he must have got a fare for a long distance. So she takes her cup of tea and puts the things away, as she cannot wait any longer. But presently a policeman steps in. He asks her name, and being told it is Jones, requests her to follow him to the hospital, as something has happened to her son. All on a sudden a dark, dismal night, full of woe and agony, falls upon her soul. And when she beholds the corpse, she cannot believe but that her boy is in

a sleep, and she calls out his name, and takes his stiff, cold hand to raise him, and then throws herself upon him to awake him by her kisses. Oh, what a boundless world of misery here opens itself to that terror-stricken soul! It was but a cabman that dropped dead from his box, and people fancied it was not of much consequence. But let us follow this poor old woman back to her home, and we shall see what the consequences are. There she sits, dumb, thoughtless, almost lifeless. The grate is cold, she has forgotten to stir the fire. She goes to bed and tries to sleep, hoping that she may never wake again. She will not see him any more here below, and what is the use of her living longer? She only lived for him. Henceforth she will have nobody and nothing to live for. Neither will anybody live for her. She is alone in the world—quite alone. Ah, how well she remembers her son's kind face! Day and night his image stands before her mind, and she remembers how he used to say, "Good-bye, mother," when he left early in the morning, how sometimes he would look in with cheerful smile when he happened to be in the neighbourhood. All that is for ever gone. There are no smiles now, and no hope, and no joy. She will have to apply to the parish, and perhaps be sent to the workhouse. She thinks often, would it not be as well to apply to the chemist for some laudanum; for *what* is life to her now *he* is dead?

But it may be asked, What is the use of such suppositions and imaginations? This is the use of them: I believe they may aid in making us more earnestly concerned about what relates to our fellow-beings. In our selfishness we only give attention to the impression which their misfortunes make upon *ourselves*. In most cases the ill-fated persons are strangers to us, and the calamities usually produce only passing impressions. But we should here apply that commandment, which contains the second half of the law and the prophets, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” When we witness an accident like that I have just been supposing, we should ask, “What consequences may this sad event have for others?” On seeing this cabman drop down dead I should not merely satisfy my curiosity by looking on for a moment with the crowd, and after that continue my occupations as if nothing had happened, but rather I should make inquiries about his family circumstances, and find out whether he had an aged mother left, who might henceforth be without support or comfort in the world; and suppose I called upon the old woman and found her in a condition of utter helplessness and despair, what an opportunity for doing good would thus be given to me! Surely, I might give her a better anodyne than laudanum! I would speak to her of Him who is “better than ten sons,” and who took upon Himself our sins, and was bruised for our iniquities. Under

God's blessing, I might succeed in turning her son's death into the starting-point of a true everlasting life to her. We read in the papers and in the police reports of persons, in despair, throwing themselves into the arms of death, because nobody whispered into their ear that there is One who loves them, and has no pleasure in their death. So we spend our time in trifling because we do not precisely see our way to spend it better. Well, Providence so often leads us, by its invisible hand, to unexpectedly make us witnesses of scenes, events, or accidents, which are suggestive of innumerable opportunities for doing good. Eternity will reveal the fact that we were often directly guided in this or that direction for the purpose that we should at such and such an hour arrive at a certain spot, to see some event happen, which would make us ejaculate, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" But, alas! often we pass on, thoughtless and listless, because we have heart for our own concerns alone, and no ears to listen to what the Lord wants to teach us by the experiences, wants, and sufferings of others.

My attention falls upon a smart lad of about fifteen buying a penny paper. He has all the appearance of being an apprentice in a shop close by. He is respectably dressed, though from several little symptoms of decay I notice in his coat, it is evident that he does not belong to a family in very affluent circumstances.

I surmise that his father is a small tradesman, and that the lad has to support himself on his meagre salary. He is very intelligent looking, and everything about him indicates that, as far as his capacities go, a good instruction and solid training will not be wasted upon him. In one sense I like him from the mere fact of his spending a penny upon a newspaper instead of buying nuts or periwinkles. It shows that the stomach is not the be-all and end-all of life with him, but that he is willing to make some sacrifice in order to feed the mind. On the other hand, I doubt whether, in his circumstances, he has spent his penny wisely. A lad in his condition, and with such prospects before him, could read better things than are to be found in the columns of a penny paper. Suppose, instead of giving his pennies away in this manner, he saves them till he is able to buy a book, say on bookkeeping, or on some such branch of knowledge, what an amazing effect it might have upon his whole life, and upon the lives of many others with whom he is connected! Perhaps he will not now rise higher than the level of a common clerk with £150 or £200 a-year, good for his work, but for nothing beyond it, and by no means fit for any occupation that requires originality of conception, based upon a solid scientific foundation. Perhaps twenty-five years hence some of his friends or acquaintances will wonder how it was that a fellow of his wit and capacities never rose

higher than a situation which, though quite respectable in itself, is yet far below what a young man like him might have attained. Perhaps the right answer to that will be, because, when he was young, he spent his spare money chiefly upon penny papers and novels, and wasted his leisure in reading such things. Thus he grew up like a beautifully gilt and enamelled watch, with fine dial-plate and elegant hands, but with very commonplace mechanism inside. And so all that comes from him is commonplace. Dreading the troubles and cares which most probably would attend the life of a family on such a small income, he resolves to remain single, and to live only for himself and his own pleasure.

Such a life may be called a dismal failure. It is a sad loss to society, to heaven, and to the poor fellow's own soul. But suppose he had spent his spare money in another way, by providing himself with useful books, and had devoted his leisure time to exercising himself in the knowledge of such branches of science as were sure to be useful to him. What a different life would now be before him from what will most likely be his lot! The career I have in view is not such as will secure him an eminently splendid situation in society, or fame in the world. But desirable as these things are, in the estimation of most people, experience has shown that the highest persons are not always the most useful, and that fame and happiness do not

always go together. No, I picture to myself our lad developing himself in such a quiet, unassuming manner, as to attract the attention of his superiors by the excellence of his achievements, rather than by an outward show of brilliant, but superficial and shallow acquirements. I can fancy him in this way becoming, as it were, the right hand of the head of the business—an all but indispensable man, who had gone so thoroughly into the spirit of the work that, though his name be not in the firm, every one who is at all acquainted with his labours knows that the success of the business is mainly owing to his genius, activity, and faithfulness. I can further fancy how, as the head of a family, he will be a blessing to his wife and children, leading and training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and accustoming them to those solid principles of self-instruction and self-education which have proved such abundant sources of happiness to himself.

While I thus allow my thoughts to have their own course, a gentleman, whose dress indicates the clergyman, takes his stand next to the lad, apparently waiting for an omnibus. Suppose now, this clergyman were to notice the lad by his side reading a penny paper, and were to try to enter into a little talk with him, and to drop a kindly hint that perhaps he might spend his money better by buying such or such a book, or by attending an evening class; and suppose

that the lad takes that hint to heart and becomes such a truly useful man as I picture to myself, what an important service that clergyman, by a few simple words dropped in passing, would have rendered not only to this fellow-being in particular, but to society at large ! Perhaps in eternity he would learn that by these few words he had done more good than by many sermons. History has taught us that some of the greatest men our race boasts of, owed their career to a single word uttered in their presence, sometimes even unconsciously. And many persons, by nature endowed with uncommon gifts, never turned them to profit, simply from want of good and timely advice or suggestion. Many people, from humility, or from thoughtlessness or ignorance, are in a state of mental numbness, which prevents them from observing or appreciating the excellent gifts they have received, and from rendering to mankind those valuable services they were evidently destined to perform. One word is sometimes enough to rouse them out of that apathy, to break the spell in which they are bound, and to make them mount up like eagles. We never can tell what the effect of a good word spoken in season will be ; but this much is certain, that by *not* speaking it when we should or might do so, we may cause such loss as all the gold in the world will be insufficient to atone for.

It is a true saying of St. James that we all offend

and come short in many things. Apart from those offences which we positively condemn as sins, we commit every day many *peccadilloes*, which look insignificant and pardonable, but which often cause infinitely greater injury than is brought about by the grossest crimes. We allow many opportunities for doing good to pass by unimproved; we often neglect what we ought to notice, and remember what we should forget—omissions which are sure to do considerable wrong somewhere, though we cannot always see where that wrong will bear its crop of evil. If God were in the same manner neglectful, inaccurate, or irregular, a single moment's peace or happiness would not be possible for any one of his creatures. It is to such irregularities that civilized society owes by far the greater part of its evils and miseries. Suppose every one of us did his duty, what a different aspect social life would present! Suppose we never neglected to speak a good word in season, and never forbore when we saw an opportunity to stretch out a helping hand towards a good work. Suppose we never came a minute too late to our work, and never gave more time to pleasure and comfort than were compatible with honesty and duty. Suppose——

But the world cannot be cured by suppositions. Lord, fill us with that spirit which finds its *meat and drink* in doing Thy will, and in finishing Thy work!

THE POOR MAN'S SHUTTLE.

IT was a bright December day, such as may be oftener witnessed in the rural districts of southern France than almost anywhere else. Field and forest having been stripped of their last summer ornaments by the storms of autumn, King Winter, like a magician, then stepped in, and with a wave of his frosty finger, and a shake of his snowy head, transformed the scene into a magnificent marble palace, hung with satin, and carpeted with a texture of dazzling white. The hoar-frost had fringed the branches of the trees with transparent alabaster-like tassels, which hung down in long slender threads of such surpassing fineness, that they seemed, when viewed from a distance, to entwine each twig with a tracery of festoons and garlands in endless variety. The road along the side of the wood looked as though covered with a robe of snowy wool which the sun had cunningly interwoven with diamonds. The air was so clear, pure, and fresh,

that it vibrated like a sounding-board, sending the croak of the raven far, far across the landscape, and giving at the same time its corresponding echo to the slightest whisper breathed in the forest.

A handsome country girl, some twenty-two years old, in the bloom of health and strength, was that morning walking towards the farm of Jaques Villemain. Her dress, though rustic in style, yet indicated taste, and showed unmistakably that its wearer belonged to the well-to-do class of country people. Her name was Octavie Rotier. She was the eldest daughter of the farmer Guillaume Rotier—well known all over the neighbourhood—and cousin to the Ville mains. The two families lived at a short distance from each other,—not more than two miles, and they were united by the kindly cords of friendship as well as the near ties of kindred. But they were not yet united by the only perfect tie—faith in a living Christ. True, they were Protestants, and as such might have shone as lights in the midst of the darkness which enwrapped an ignorant and bigoted Popish population. But their Protestantism was dead, rather than living and active. It was a part of their inheritance, and not having been acquired by regeneration, was little valued. The chapel was about four miles distant. It had no pastor of its own. Once a month the minister of one of the principal Protestant churches in the neighbouring town came and preached

a sermon, and baptized the children ; and twice a year or so the Lord's Supper was administered. This state of things was not very much calculated to promote religious habits among the scattered Protestants of the district. Jaques Villemain began to reflect within himself why, having stayed at home three Sundays of the month, he should not do the same on the fourth likewise. And Guillaume Rotier had come to the conclusion that reading a useful book at home was, to say the least of it, quite as edifying as driving four miles through the forest to listen, half sleeping and listless, to a long sermon. In spite of these things, they were quiet, affable, kind-hearted people. They were well known as being among the chief supporters of the Benevolent Work Society—one of the most useful institutions of the country-side. Its members had united themselves together with the object of doing away with begging, and of reducing pauperism in the district. The first principle of the Society was this—never to give alms to a beggar, but always to give him work, or, at least, to offer him work. The Society had its own bakery, eating-house, and hospital in the neighbouring town of Auverges, where the central board met at stated times. The members bound themselves to take a certain number of tickets every year, and it was with these that they paid the poor people for their work. For a ticket a poor man could obtain a good dinner and a night's lodging.

The work the town's-people gave the poor consisted of weaving, mat-making, basket-plaiting, and such like. The farmers, again, gave them wood to cut either in the forest, or on their own farms, but if at any time they happened to be short of uncut wood, they improvised some other sort of work for the poor men and women who applied for relief. Applicants in these circumstances were sent on a sham errand to a neighbouring farmer, or were ordered to carry a pile of cut wood from one corner of the farm to another. If the applicant was a robust fellow, a log of wood of sixty or seventy pounds weight would be given him to carry to the next farmhouse, from whence another poor man would carry it back on some other occasion. Every two neighbouring families had such a log between them, and, owing to its being thus continually carried backward and forward, it was called "The Poor Man's Shuttle."

Octavie Rotier was this December morning on her way to pay a visit to her cousin Josephine Villemain, a girl some five or six years her senior. Josephine was highly intellectual, but at the same time had sensitive feelings and a warm heart. With an unusual amount of practical wisdom and energy, she combined rare amiability of character. Unfortunately, her bodily strength was not equal to that of her mind. She was often laid aside with illness. She was so this morning, and her cousin Octavie had

set out, as she herself said, to cheer her up in her affliction.

Octavie had proceeded about half way between the two farms, when she saw at a little distance before her a person seated by the wayside apparently engaged in reading. Two things combined to rouse her curiosity. First, she could not help wondering what strange fancy could have led the man to choose the edge of a forest for his reading-room, with the thermometer below freezing-point. And then, she wondered what could have induced him to sit down in the snow, for having passed this road a thousand times, she knew very well that there was no seat or bench near. But very soon her curiosity as to the latter point was satisfied. She saw that the stranger was seated on a log of wood.

“Oh, that is ‘our shuttle!’” said the girl to herself somewhat relieved, as she identified the well-known block, upon which she had often seated herself when, as a little girl, she had played in the yard.

Her first thought was, that the stranger must be a poor man carrying the log to her father’s house; but she at once dismissed this thought when on approaching the man, he rose, put the memorandum-book he had been looking at into his pocket, and with a courteous bow asked her whether this road led to the farm of Jaques Villemain. Certainly the young man was not a beggar. He was well-dressed, and on his

kind and open countenance was an expression of earnestness and composure such as is seldom observed in persons of his age.

"My name is Octavie, and I am just going to call at cousin Jaques'," she answered, with that unsophisticated simplicity by which the French country girl is so favourably distinguished from the town coquette.

"Oh, thank you," said the stranger. "I shall take the liberty of following you, if you will permit me to do so."

"Gladly, sir," she answered, but as they passed on she looked back at the log of wood, saying, half audibly, "I wonder how 'our shuttle' came to lie there."

"Not a very comfortable seat that for winter-time," he said, with a smile, noticing her movement, and understanding at least some of her words. "It was dropped there by a poor fellow, just as I came up the road. He seemed rather confused when he noticed me, and tried to run away. But when he saw that I could easily overtake him, he stayed and sat down on the log. I pitied the poor fellow, for he seemed very tired, and though young, yet from sheer destitution he was unable to carry the log a single step further. He told me his story, which was pitiable enough in all truth. He said that during the last four years he had been living upon labour given him by a certain

benevolent society of this place. He was carrying this piece of wood to a neighbouring farm, but had broken down on the road, and lost his reward, which, he said, was a ticket for dinner. I said to him that he ought to go back to the people who had given him the log to carry, and tell them where it was lying, that they might send some one for it, lest it should be stolen. He laughed at this, and cried, 'Well, let it be stolen. The sooner the better.'

"'But don't you know that stealing is bad?' I asked him.

"'Well, I don't know why it should,' he answered doggedly. 'The rich people got their money in no better way. At any rate it is grossly unjust that they should have all and we poor people nothing. It is more than time that things should be equally distributed. But since they won't do that, I don't see why we should not try to get as much out of them as we can, and take at night what they won't give us in the day.'

"I tried to convince him of the wickedness of such a doctrine, but all my reasonings were lost upon the poor man, as he could neither read nor write, and knew nothing of God and His commandments. I then jotted down his name and address in my memorandum-book, so that I may be able to find him out some day, when I came back to the district."

"I am not surprised at what you have been telling

me," said Octavie. "Most of the poor people supported by the Society are communists. They believe they have a right to be supported by us. They do not take our gifts as favours at all, but hold that it is our duty to give them. We have for many years fed and clothed both them and their families, and yet, instead of thanking us, I am certain that if they had the chance they would rob us of everything, and murder us besides, if the police did not prevent them."

"I believe you are quite right there," rejoined the young man. "And, in my opinion, it reveals a state of things which might set the Benevolent Society pondering seriously whether the spirit in which it distributes its gifts is the right one."

"I believe there is scarcely a society in the whole empire which equals ours in liberality," Octavie observed. "You can form no proper idea of the amount annually given to the poor in this district."

"I readily believe you," said the stranger; "but liberality and wisdom do not always go together. To give much is one thing; to give well is another, and far more difficult one."

Octavie was silent. The distinction had never occurred to her before. Still she felt that there was a vast difference, though she could not at once discover where it lay.

"It appears to me," continued the young man.

“that the Benevolent Society leaves the most important portion of its work undone, so long as it does not go further than feeding the bodies of the poor. It was observed, so long as three thousand years ago, that ‘man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.’”

Octavie at this looked at him a little askance, to see whether there was anything indicative of the clergyman about him, for she thought that such observations could scarcely be expected from a layman.

“Hélas, Monsieur,” she said, “I am afraid the education of the poor is sadly neglected in these quarters.”

“I fear you are right there, madame,” he answered. “if the man whom I have just been talking to was an average specimen of the poor people.”

“Well, I am afraid he was too good a specimen. Hardly one out of fifty can either read or write.”

“That is very bad indeed. Still it is not the worst. The man was ignorant of the alarming condition of his own soul as a sinner before God, neither did he know anything of the one way of escape. And how can a man be saved if he knows neither the true God nor Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent?”

“Of course not,” said Octavie, somewhat confused,

and in a very low tone, for she was doubtful of the correctness of the stranger's observations.

"I am glad to hear you say so," said the young man. "I fear there are not many persons in this district who believe that neither in the matter of benevolence, nor in that of education, nor, indeed, in any other matter, can we do anything truly good without Jesus. 'Without Me,' He said, 'you can do nothing.' But how many people try to do everything without Him! Nay, how many grow up, live till they are forty, sixty, or even eighty years old, and die without even so much as thinking of Him!"

Octavie gave no answer to this. An inward voice seemed to say to her, "That young man must have made inquiries about you, for he has exactly described your case." So they walked on for a short distance in silence, during which she vaguely hoped that he would not put any more questions to her on the matter.

"Did I understand you to say that you are a relative of Monsieur Jaques Villemain?" he began again.

"Yes," she answered firmly, relieved by this turn of the conversation, "Jaques and my father are cousins-german. I am a daughter of William Rotier."

"Oh, indeed!" he said in a voice of agreeable surprise. "So I have the pleasure of speaking to a

daughter of one of the oldest Protestant families of France. The Rotiers were among the first Huguenot martyrs."

"They were," replied Octavie; "but, grace à Dieu, we live in better times than when my poor ancestors were cruelly put to death."

"Our times are less barbarous certainly, but whether they can show greater development of spiritual life, I very much doubt. Would to God, madame, that the present Protestants of France were as eager after the sincere milk of the word, as their forefathers were, who did not think it hard to walk even fifteen miles in the dead of night, to hear your ancestor Gauthier Rotier preach the Gospel of salvation by grace."

"They must have had better sermons then than we have now-a-days up there in our chapel in the forest," Octavie answered sarcastically. "We have a sermon only once a month, and even that is more than is needed in the estimation of many."

"But are there not some of you who would be pleased to hear the Word of God preached every Sunday?" asked the young man.

"Well—yes I believe there are some. At all events, I for one should like it very much. Our Sundays are rather dull—the forenoons at least. But then they ought to be *fine* sermons."

"But what do you mean by 'fine sermons'?"

"Well, telling sermons, you know, sermons beauti-

fully composed, and so eloquently delivered, as to keep one awake."

"Well, I should like to try whether I could satisfy you in this respect," said the young man. "If the chief object is to keep you awake, I believe I know an infallible means of attaining that."

"Indeed!" cried Octavie merrily, "I wonder what it is."

"Well, I'll tell you, madame. I should just preach the living Christ. Where He is, you know, sleeping is impossible, because He either pleases or displeases people too much, to allow them to dose."

Octavie could make no answer to this remark.

"Are you a minister?" she inquired, after a pause.

"I am a candidate for the ministry," he answered. "My name is Pierre Quintal, and I have come to this district to visit the Protestant families, and try to institute a more regular religious observance among them."

The name of Quintal was not unknown to Octavie. It was borne by one of the most distinguished and influential Protestant families of the South.

The two now reached Jaques Villemain's farmhouse. It was a large, well-built house, the exterior of which testified to the prosperous circumstances of its owner. Octavie ushered her companion into a large room looking to the front, while she hastened to fetch her cousin. She soon found him in the cow-

house; and while he proceeded to the parlour to see the candidate, she went to Josephine's room. The invalid was sitting in an arm-chair, propped up with pillows.

"Oh, I am so glad you are able to leave your bed again!" she said, pressing her lips to the pale cheek of her cousin. "We'll soon have you out of doors now."

"Thank you, my dear, I am getting better," Josephine replied, "though I fear I shall not see much of field and forest this year. I must ask you to receive my new-year's children, and I hope you'll agree to do."

Josephine's new-year's children were poor women who were accustomed, on the new-year's day, to receive clothes for themselves and their families from her. On that occasion, they were treated, in the barn, to coffee and currant-bread. This was always a happy day, both to the poor folks and to their liberal benefactress; and Octavie had been accustomed to assist her cousin in managing the little festival.

"Of course, I shall do that gladly," Octavie answered; "but I hope you will be so far recovered as to attend yourself."

The two friends now went over a list of guests they expected, and made up a catalogue of the articles of dress which they had partly made during the past year, and partly bought.

"Alas ! it is a poor collection after all," sighed Josephine. "I wish we could do more for these poverty-stricken creatures. But it would be of no use to give them more clothes or blankets. They would be certain to take them to the pawnbroker's next day."

"I think I know what we ought to do for them," said Octavie ; "but the question is how to do it."

"Ah, what is that?"

"We should teach them to read and write. This became clear to me when M. Quintal was conversing with me."

"M. Quintal ? Who is he ?" asked Josephine.

"Oh, a candidate I met as I came along this morning. He was seated on our 'shuttle,' which was lying at the side of the road. M. Quintal told me that he had seen a poor man drop it there."

"Ay," said Josephine, sadly, "I was afraid it would come to that. I was looking out at the window and saw the poor fellow take it up as my brother William bade him, but I said to myself, I wonder whether he'd carry it half the way. I even went the length of remonstrating with William about it. I said to him that I was afraid we were too reckless in our treatment of the poor. Charity is too much degraded to the low level of business. We seem to make scarcely any difference between our poor fellow-beings and the cattle we buy and sell. We just give them something to eat and drink, and then send them away to wander

till hunger drives them back to our doors. Are they not human beings like ourselves? We should treat them as such, and not like dogs and pigs."

"Well, and what did your brother say to that?"

"He said that most of those people were no better than dogs or pigs, and that some of them were even worse. And thereupon he gave some instances of the coarseness and filthiness of these people, which were really sickening. But I said to him that these things might be all true, and yet that the cause, or, at least, one of the causes, of it might be sought in our own selfishness and unmercifulness, because we did not care for the education of these poor creatures, but allowed them to grow up like brutes, not knowing that there was a God and an eternity."

"Quite true," said Octavie. "You are just speaking as M. Quintal spoke. The people know nothing of Christ, he said; and how can they be happy without Him? He said such beautiful but grave things that they made me quite solemn."

"Did he speak in that way?" said Josephine, in a voice indicative of great concern. "Did he speak of Christ, and say that we could not be happy without Him?"

"Yes, assuredly he did," answered Octavie, with a smile. Her cousin's animation and interest amused her.

"I wish very much you had brought him here."

"But he is a stranger to all of us, you know, and I thought that you were in bed. But he may be still in the house."

And without waiting for any answer from her cousin, Octavie rushed to the front room, where she found M. Villemain and his visitor just finishing their conversation.

"I am very glad you have not gone away," she said. "My cousin Josephine is an invalid, and wishes very much to see you. She hopes you will say a few words to her."

"So do I," said M. Villemain. "You will be kind enough to speak to the sick in my house, sir, now that you are here. This is the first time for eighteen years that a preacher has stepped across my threshold. M. Quintal will be our guest for the day," he added, turning to Octavie. "So, as I am urgently wanted, you will introduce him to Madame Villemain and the rest of the family. I shall see you again at dinner, sir;" and hereupon Villemain went out, his face beaming with pleasure.

Octavie took the candidate to the sitting-room, where Madame Villemain received her guest with all that hospitable simplicity characteristic of the inhabitants of the rural districts of the South. She then accompanied him and Octavie to Josephine's room. It was not long before they were engaged in a most interesting conversation.

“What struck me especially,” said Josephine, “was Octavie’s telling me that you had spoken of Christ as being indispensable to our happiness. Now, sir, that is just what I am anxious to hear more about. We seldom hear that. We are told that Christ is useful for us, but not that He is indispensable. Yet I feel it is that we should be told.”

“How glad I am to hear you say that!” said M. Quintal; “but permit me to ask what makes you think so?”

“Well, you see, sir, I am very weak, and often laid aside with sickness, which makes me think that my life will not be long here below.”

“Oh, child, don’t speak in that way,” cried Madame Villemain, “you are young yet. She is sometimes much depressed in spirit, sir,” she continued, turning to the candidate, “and wants a little cheering up.”

“No, no, mamma, you are mistaken, I am not at all depressed. Even though I should live longer than any of you, that makes no difference, for I feel much in need of a Saviour, who is able to save me from my sins,—from death and from the grave. And it is not only me that is in such need, but you too, mamma, and all of us.”

“Whether young or old, no one can be truly happy without Christ,” said the candidate. “Without Him we are for ever lost. It was because of this that He came into the world to die, and rise out of the grave

for us. He knew that as sinners we had for ever shut out ourselves from the presence of God and His heaven. He loved us so much, that He came down to open up a new and living way for us to God, even a way which could only be laid in His own blood. In this way we must walk, and if we do not, we can never go to God and be saved."

"There is much in what you say which is not quite clear to me," observed Madame Villemain, "but I hope you will some day explain it to me, as I learn that you are going to be our minister for some time at least."

"Is it?" exclaimed Josephine, her eyes shining with delight.

Yes, it was quite true. M. Quintal, hearing that the district was almost destitute of Gospel-preaching, and that the chapel in the forest was empty nearly the whole year round, had, with the consent of the Consistory, and of his parents, resolved to settle down among the people, and try to unite them into a regularly organized church. Being aware of the state of spiritual destitution in which the place had been, he knew that at first he could not expect much sympathy or co-operation. Fortunately his circumstances were such as to enable him to commence without any support from the people. He offered to serve the church gratuitously for the first year, if they would allow him the use of the chapel, promise to attend service, and send their children to his catechizings. M.

Villemain gave his consent at once. On these conditions, he believed, no one would object.

After dinner it was suggested that it might be as well for the candidate to make M. Rotier's acquaintance, and secure his approval. He therefore accompanied Octavie when she returned home. She was deeply impressed with the conversation she had heard between the new pastor and Josephine. With solemn surprise she had witnessed the hallowed effect his words had upon her cousin's mind.

"I know," she said, as they walked on, "I know that the Bible tells us that Christ died for us, and we are told the same at the communion table, but I could never quite make out what it meant."

"It means this," replied the candidate, taking his New Testament from his pocket, "that Jesus took upon himself the penalty, which we ought to have suffered for our trespasses against the law of God."

And he read to her the first part of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where it says, that scarcely for a righteous man will one die, but that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners.

"Our sins against God are very great," he added, gravely. "We have deserved to die like malefactors, and to be for ever cast out from God's presence. But Jesus has suffered all in our stead, and has thus set us free by His death. This is the great love wherewith God hath loved us."

"And truly it is a great love," she whispered; "I never thought of it before."

"It is only on this ground," he replied, "that I can receive peace; that I can look forward to my death and the coming judgment without trembling."

"So you do not fear when you think of dying?" she asked, in a tone of surprise.

"Well," he answered, "I dread the hour of death, of course, as a period of bodily pain and agony; but I do not fear for what is to come after. I know that my soul is saved."

"Ah, how do you know that?" she asked; "I wish I could but say the same."

"Well, you can and you must say the same," he rejoined, "if you believe with your heart that Jesus died for you. You cannot possibly believe this, and at the same time believe the contrary—that you will yet have to suffer for your sins yourself. The one necessarily excludes the other."

"I see, I see," she said to herself in a low voice, and she walked on for some time absorbed in thought.

Soon they reached the spot where they had met.

"See, see, our shuttle is gone!" she cried. "I am certain it has been stolen."

But this was not the case. No sooner had they entered her father's farmyard than they saw the log lying in its usual place. M. Quintal, of course, had not told her that he had given half a franc to the poor

man under condition that he should go and fetch some one to help him to carry the block to the farm.

“Ah, I am very glad to see,” he said in a voice of satisfaction, “that the poor fellow is honester in his practice than in his words. We never should despair of humanity.”

* * * * *

Eighteen months have elapsed. If we walk to the chapel in the forest on a Sunday morning, we shall find it crowded with people all listening attentively to the living words which their young minister is preaching to them.

Adjoining the chapel is a large commodious school-room, recently built. Here the children of the poor obtain instruction during the day, and such of their parents as like to come, during the evening. A goodly number of Romanist families avail themselves of this opportunity of emerging out of the mist of ignorance. The expenses of the school are met by the congregation, some of the members of which have united together to teach the adult poor in the evening school.

A society, founded by the female members of the church, visits the sick poor and reads the Gospel to them. Josephine Villemain is its president. And not far from the chapel a charming house is being built. It is the parsonage.

The church succeeded in forming a fund to pay

their beloved minister, but they could not afford to give him a house. But here the farmers Guillaume Rotier and Jaques Villemain stepped in and generously presented the church with a parsonage. Nor did their generosity cause extraordinary surprise, for it was generally whispered about that it would not be long ere M. Rotier would be the minister's father-in-law, and M. Villemain his cousin.

And there was no more of the shuttle: for the spirit of Christian love, diffused abroad, united the people in a kindly interest, so that when any calamity overtook a family, a friendly hand was readily lent them; and the evils of poverty being prevented, such mechanical poor-law remedies as "the log" were unneeded.

A PEEP INTO A WESTPHALIAN PARSONAGE.

THE village of Rohnfeld is an out-of-the-way place. If you start from the town of Hamm, as we did, you must be a good pedestrian to accomplish the walk in less than three hours. I did not intend going to it, but my friend Dr. Allganer, one of the judges of the Hamm circuit, assured me that it would be well worth my while to pay a visit to his friend Pastor Hempel, who had been his companion some five-and-twenty years ago at the University of Bonn, and had continued his best friend ever since.

We set out on a fine afternoon in August. Having walked for a quarter of a mile up the main road, we turned to the left along a footpath which led into a dense wood. The weather being rather hot, it was really pleasant to get into the cool shade of the forest. The birds sang their carol overhead—the thrush, and the chaffinch, and the culver being con-

spicuous among the performers. While they made the vast music hall, with its thousands of pillars, resound with their warbling, the woodpecker every now and then chimed in with its laughter, as if to mock the noisy orchestra; and the crow sent up its harsh croak, as if to express its indignation at the woodpecker's impudence. From time to time a squirrel was seen leaping ahead at a short distance, swinging its bushy fox-tail to and fro, till it climbed up a tree, and disappeared behind the impenetrable leaf-curtain. It was well indeed that my friend was familiar enough with this labyrinth of footpaths to justify his saying that he was no more likely to go astray in it than in his own bedroom. To me the place appeared to be the very spot which gave rise to to the German phrase,—“He does not see the wood for the multitude of trees.”

When we emerged from the forest, we found ourselves at the entrance of a valley, in which the village of Rohnfeld lay basking in the setting sun. The view was highly picturesque. The white plastered houses, with their red-tiled roofs, contrasted strikingly with the verdure of the pastures and the yellow hue of the wheat and rye fields which surrounded the village on the south and east. The forest spread along the slopes and across the tops of the hills that sheltered the village from the northern winds. An extensive marble quarry, whose fantastic

excavations and bright colours glistened in the evening sun, gave the place an exceedingly romantic aspect. In the fields, men, women, and children were busy at work.

It was quite evening when we knocked at the pastor's door, or rather, when, after the patriarchal custom of the district, we entered it without knocking at all. No sooner, however, had the bass voice of my friend resounded through the passage which ran from the front to the back door, dividing the house into two equal parts, than the pastor, his long meerschaum in one hand, and a burning candle in the other, stepped out of a back room on the left hand side. He hastened to meet us, his face smiling all over, and looking all the more friendly that it was brightened by the glare of the candle. His wife came behind, her hand shading her eyes from the light which prevented her from clearly discerning us. Altogether we formed such a group as Gerard Dow would have loved to paint.

"Willkommen! Willkommen!" cried the kind couple, as they cordially shook our hands.

We were all nearly of the same age—on the shady side of forty. The pastor was a tall thin man with a very open face, each feature of which spoke of kindness, sympathy, and cordiality. "Die Frau Pastorin" was a little woman with smiling eyes, and with that expression of cheerfulness always seen

in those who find their pleasure in making others happy.

The room into which we were led by our host looked exceedingly comfortable, though nothing could well be more simple. The walls were whitewashed, and the oak floor was uncarpeted. A square oak table stood near the wall opposite the door. Behind it was a sofa, covered with chintz. A gigantic cast-iron stove was noticeable *in* the wall opposite to the windows. Only one half of it was visible to us, the other half projecting into the adjacent room, so that this heavy piece of furniture, which is never missed in a German sitting-room, could heat two apartments at a time. A little walnut book-case stood in one corner, matched by a cupboard of the same size in the other, the space between them alongside the wall being occupied by a few matted chairs, and a little flower-stand, with a splendid nosegay, which doubtless emitted a sweet fragrance. I say doubtless, for its odour was neutralised by the pastor and another gentlemen, who sat behind the table, meerschaum in mouth, perfuming the apartment with clouds of their pet weed. Nor was there the least prospect of our making things better, for my friend the doctor, who had consumed not a few cigars during our walk, was only too glad to accept the pipe which the pastor now offered him, and for which he said the cigar was but a poor substitute. But in spite of the somewhat

cloudy appearance of the room—to which, by the by, I soon got accustomed, German tobacco being of a very mild character—the whole looked very comfortable and home-like.

Four children, two little girls and two lads of about twelve and fourteen, were seated at the table, engaged apparently in preparing their next day's school lessons. Their mother, who was knitting, now and then helped the little ones in their work, occasionally joining in the conversation which was going on between the gentlemen. It was evident that the family was quite accustomed to such visits as ours, for we did not appear to interfere in any way with the usual course of household life. It seemed to be the understanding that every one who entered the parlour should be looked upon and treated as a member of the family. Here there was none of the stiff conventionalism which so often mars the intercourse of less unsophisticated, but by no means more refined people. At first sight, undoubtedly, Pastor Hempel's sitting-room, with its uncarpeted floor and white-washed walls, the three gentlemen sitting smoking, and the hock-bottle and glasses on the table, looked very much like a tap-room; but this impression disappeared when one enjoyed for a little their kind, cordial conversation, and became interested in the important subjects under discussion.

After having taken our seats, we were introduced

to the gentleman who, like us, appeared to be a visitor. His name was Herr Stieg, but being the schoolmaster of the place, he was usually addressed as Herr Lehrer; the German custom being not to call you by your name, but by your title, if you have one. This evening Herr Lehrer had called upon his clergyman to discuss the syllabus of biblical subjects for next year's school course. The pastor supposing that the discussion would not be without interest to us, continued it after our arrival.

It appeared that the schoolmaster—who was a very intelligent-looking man, and whose sharp features seemed to indicate considerable critical acumen—differed from his pastor on the question as to how far the miraculous matter of the Bible should be made a subject for school instruction. In Herr Stieg's opinion the chief object of religious teaching in schools should not be to develop a desire for the extraordinary and the sensational in the minds of children, but rather a sense of the morally good, the beautiful, and the true. Consequently, he believed that the imaginations of children should be very sparingly excited by narratives of the miraculous, but very copiously instructed in the purely historical and moral parts of the Bible.

My friend the doctor seemed to go a considerable length with the Lehrer. He, as a lawyer and a judge, was fully convinced that the principles of

justice and righteousness could not be too much impressed upon the youthful mind. In his profession he had often had to deal with persons who pretended to know a great deal about the future world, but who proved themselves very ignorant of the first rules of good conduct in the present world. And he believed that society would be much more benefited by children being taught how Joseph feared God, and how Ruth loved her mother-in-law, than by their learning how the ass of Balaam spoke, or how Elisha caused a piece of iron to swim on the water.

To this the pastor replied that he quite agreed with the doctor if no other alternative were left. But it appeared to him that this was not a correct representation of the matter. The miraculous, *in itself*, was not, in his opinion, what should be brought before the minds of children, but the miraculous as a *manifestation of the divine*. The Bible proclaimed, through its miraculous stories, the great truth that there is a supernatural power—a living and almighty God, who rules this world, and is at once mighty to destroy or to save. The question was whether it was desirable that this truth should be deeply impressed upon the minds of children. If it were desirable—and he had no doubt his friends agreed with him that it was—he could not see why the narratives of the miraculous should be avoided. Indeed, he was persuaded that to keep these wholly

from children would tend to make them doubt whether there was any God at all. He pointed to the sad fact that in our age the belief in the supernatural is greatly diminishing among the people. The number is rapidly increasing of those who, on the ground that miracles had never been seen either in our days, or in those of our fathers, contended that they were impossible, and that there were no power superior to what are called the laws of nature. This showed that the question, Has there ever been a miracle? was only another form of the question, Is there a living God? He admitted indeed that, if it could be proved that miracles were impossible, then the proof that there is no God is involved with it; an essential feature in God's character being that he is a God "who only doeth wondrous things." Now the Bible, as a matter of history, assures us that miracles were performed in the presence of many witnesses. The Bible history, therefore, and especially the miraculous in the Bible history, ought to be regarded as a strong barrier which God had set up to keep mankind from being swept away by the flood of materialistic and atheistic systems. This, the pastor thought, might account for the fact of the Bible history *teeming* with miracles; and he could not see how biblical history could be taught at all if we left out the narratives of the miraculous.

I fully agreed with the pastor, while the doctor

admitted that there was much truth in his friend's reasoning. Herr Stieg, however, proved very tenacious of his own opinion, and called all his logic into play to keep the ground upon which he had taken his stand. So a very lively and sharp debate ensued as to how far the miraculous is indispensable in proving the existence of the supernatural.

The discussion would undoubtedly have been carried on all night had not the Frau Pastorin reminded us that it was supper-time, and invited us to step into the adjacent room, where a large tureen of steaming broth was waiting us. The schoolmaster having taken his leave, the pastor told us that, though a conscientious man and an able teacher, he was yet the cause of many difficulties which he (the pastor) had to encounter in his ministerial work in the parish. As the clergymen of the Prussian church are divided into two parties—the orthodox and the rationalistic—so likewise are the schoolmasters. Unhappily Herr Stieg belonged to the rationalistic party, and if he had had unlimited control over his school, would undoubtedly have done away with biblical, and, in fact, with religious instruction altogether. Fortunately, however, his power did not extend thus far. The school being a state institution as well as the church, the schoolmaster is bound by the laws and regulations which the Government has imposed. Among these is one

which most decidedly commands biblical history to be taught. Moreover, the school is under the supervision of the pastor, who is the president of the school-board, and the schoolmaster has to regulate the course of instruction in consultation with him. It was owing to this regulation that Herr Steig had visited Pastor Hempel this evening. And it was his wont to do so once a month. Of course, as an officer of the state, he strictly observed the rules, and never gave any cause for complaint to the Government. But, while keeping within the limits of the law, he had still ample scope left to infuse his sceptical opinions, or at least his unbiblical spirit, into the minds of the children. And the pastor at his catechizations had great difficulty in overcoming the evil effects of his influence. Among the adult parishioners there were also some who were of the same spirit, and found in the Lehrer a strong supporter of their revolutionary schemes, both in church and state. It is true their number was not large, but some of the most influential people of the place, and the ablest thinkers, were among them.

I happened to make the observation that it was indeed a matter for thankfulness to God on the part of the people of Rhonfeld that their pastor was of another spirit than their schoolmaster.

“If that were not the case the whole parish would most likely turn infidel,” said the doctor. “This, I

must confess, is one of the drawbacks of state education and state religion. If matters happen to take a wrong turn, there is no power among men to put them right again except Separatism, which, of course, can only afford a partial remedy."

"And suppose the King and the Government themselves turn sceptical one day," I said, "what is to be expected of the whole nation, since your King, as I understand, is *summus episcopus* of the Church?"

"Let us zealously pray that God may for ever keep us from such a calamity!" said the pastor; and, having beckoned to the eldest boy, he took the family Bible from his hand to close the day with their usual evening worship.

The way in which their devotions were conducted was free from everything like formality or ceremony. The family remained sitting at the supper table, which stood uncleared, while the pastor, having pushed his plate aside, laid the Bible in its place. Still it was very edifying and even solemnizing to witness the expression of devotional feeling noticeable on all faces when the pastor, having opened the Holy Book, began: "Im Namen Jesu, Amen!" He then read a portion of the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel, "I am the vine," &c.

"Yes," he said, "*He* is the vine, and *we* are the branches. All our strength, wisdom, consolation,

and hope must come from Jesus. You remember how often I have said to you that a man's power is that which he loves with all his heart. If you love money, money is your power; it is for money's sake that you do everything; it is through money that you try to establish your happiness; it is to money that you look for consolation in adversity. And so if you love the praise of men or worldly pleasure, the praise of men and worldly pleasure is your power. But we love Jesus, do we not? And if we do, *He* is our power. He has saved us, so we owe our life, our very existence to Him. He has bought us at the price of His own blood, so we are His legal property. He has died for us, so we live for Him. In a word, we are Christ's, just as the branch is the vine's. We should keep this in mind wherever we are, whatever we do. 'I am a branch of that glorious heavenly vine,' each one of us should say to himself or to herself—the father in his study or at his office, the mother at her needle, the children at school, the servant in the kitchen. 'I am not the world's, neither my own, neither the devil's, but I am Christ's; I am a saved, sanctified, and highly blessed child of God through Jesus Christ my Lord.' If that truth lives in our hearts, we cannot help showing forth His holy image. How is it that the branches bear grapes? Because they are of the vine-nature; because they live and grow in the vine. Thus we,

too, if day and night we live and grow in Jesus, speaking like Jesus, loving like Jesus."

The pastor then folded his hands for prayer. I rose to kneel down, but seeing that the others retained their seats, I followed their example. The prayer was short and simple—only half a dozen sentences or so—but warm from the heart, and full of unction. It was like a child's last whisper to his father before going to rest.

Die Frau Pastorin then took her seat at the piano, and the beautiful hymn, "Ach bleib mit diener Gnade" ("Oh stay with us in mercy," &c.), was sung with a harmonious accompaniment, which was quite in keeping with the solemn yet cheering melody. After this she pressed a kiss on her husband's forehead, and bidding us good night, withdrew, followed by the two boys, the younger of whom, as I now observed, did not address her as his mother, but as "die Frau Pastorin."

"Is that boy not a son of yours?" I asked our host, as he and the doctor filled their last pipe for the evening.

"No; he was not born in my house," answered the pastor, "neither does he bear my name; still he is dear to us as a son, and our children love him as their own brother. He is an orphan, and it has pleased God to put us in the place of his parents. But," he continued, "permit me to ask you a question?"

“Gladly.”

“Did you not rise to kneel down at prayers?”

“I did.”

“I wish you would unlearn that popish habit, and try to teach your fellow-countrymen to give it up,” he said in a kindly but at the same time grave tone of voice.

“Do you call kneeling a popish habit?” I said. “Surely you must know that it is sanctioned by many examples in the Gospel. St. Paul knelt down on the shore when he prayed with the elders of the church of Ephesus. It is a Christian apostolic practice, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” he answered, kindly, “if performed on solemn and extraordinary occasions. But the popish mischief consists in killing the truly Christian and apostolic by overdoing it, and thus reducing it to a dead form. As far as my historical researches have taught me, I believe that the common practice of the first Christians was *not* to kneel down, but simply to be seated or to recline at prayer. On festive occasions it was customary to adopt the standing attitude with the palms of the hands turned up towards heaven. The kneeling was most common in the Jewish and afterwards in the Eastern churches, and usually practised on solemn occasions, mostly expressive of deep contrition, self-humiliation, and sorrow. But neither among the Jews nor among

the first Christians was it customary to kneel down at the common prayers of the day. The Romish Pope taught us that, as well as a great many other ceremonies, which in the beginning may have been innocent, or even edifying, but which have grown idolatrous and deadening to the spirit, since he made them hackneyed by bringing them down to commonplace habits."

This observation of the pastor led us to another lively and interesting discussion about the true nature and object of Christian prayer. Our opinions were considerably divided in the beginning, but at last we found that we concurred thus far: that in matters of devotion we ought as much as possible to abstain from assuming such forms as express greater piety, deeper emotions, and higher spiritual life, than we really experience.

When the doctor and myself had retired to our bedroom, he told me the story of Bernhard, the pastor's foster-son.

"Our good pastor," he said, "refrained from telling you the story, as he could not very well do it without praising himself. But that which modesty prevented him from doing, there is no harm in my attempting. Little Bernhard is a native of Kemprath, a town in Brandenburg, where the pastor had a charge before he accepted a call to this place. In that community there was a person of the name of

Laubach, who, having a large manufactory in which nearly half the population of the town, directly or indirectly, found a livelihood, exercised a great influence, not only upon the inhabitants of the town, but also upon the leading men in the province. In a word, he was by many looked up to as a king. But he was not a good man. He was a 'freethinker'—not believing in any revealed religion. For the sake of outward appearance, however, he regularly attended church, professing himself to be a Christian. Through his great influence he generally succeeded in bringing the clergymen of the parish round to his views. He would often invite them to dinner at his splendid villa outside the town, make them many presents, and promise them his assistance in case of their looking out for promotion. Pastor Hempel's two immediate predecessors, who had proved too weak to resist the temptation, had turned thoroughly sceptical. The consequence was that our friend, on entering on his charge, found the church sadly neglected and the population of the town thoroughly given up to gaiety and pleasure. When, however, Herr Laubach tried to decoy the new priest into the same snare in which he had caught his two predecessors he met with invincible opposition. It would take me too long were I to give you a description of the untiring efforts of the pastor to influence the unhappy infidel for good, both by his

excellent sermons and his Christian behaviour. Not only were they in vain, however, but they had an effect quite contrary to what was hoped for. Herr Laubach, upon seeing that the pastor gained more and more friends every day among the people, began to persecute him in every way in his power. And through the mediation of influential friends among the higher dignitaries of the church, he succeeded in causing him to be looked upon with disfavour by the Provincial Board as though he were a dangerous fanatic. Gradually certain allowances, privileges, and emoluments were withheld from him. His income, which had diminished as his family increased, was at length so reduced that it was all but impossible for the poor man to supply his wife and children with the necessaries of life. The lower classes, and especially those who were connected with the factory, were constantly incited to oppose him. In short, Pastor Hempel's life was made so unbearable that he was compelled to look out for another charge, which happily was offered to him here. He was not long away from Kemprath before the iniquity of the wicked got its reward. Herr Laubach failed in his speculations and committed suicide. His wife had died a few years before. Bernhard, a boy of six, was the only member of the family that was left. Nobody cared for the poor child, for the spirit of the people, and especially of

the middle class, many of whom were ruined by Laubach's bankruptcy, was too bitter to admit of the sweet emotions of charity and pity. So the child was given up to the magistrates to be dealt with as though he had been a foundling. Pastor Hempel, of course, was informed of all this by his friends at Kemprath. One day he received a letter from one of them, in which, among various other things relative to the sad bankruptcy, the writer told him that on such and such a day next week Laubach's child was, according to the custom of the place, to be boarded out by public auction to the lowest bidder. The pastor knew what that meant to the poor child. It implied nothing short of being treated like a slave. He also knew little Bernhard, whom he used to see at church every Sunday. He remembered that he was an intelligent-looking boy, of rather delicate constitution. On the day of the auction, much to the surprise of every one present, the pastor was found in the town-hall among the bidders. He took the boy for nothing, walked off with him to the railway station, and brought him to his home, glad as a good shepherd who has found a lost sheep."

"Grand! noble!" I exclaimed. "This is fulfilling the commandment of our Lord: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.' And the boy—does he in any way reward this generosity of his benefactor?"

“ Oh, the boy does not know how to show his gratitude and affection. He manifests a most amiable disposition. The pastor hopes to be enabled to grant him his heart's desire, that of being trained as a clergyman. ‘And then,’ our friend says, ‘when he gets his licence, who can tell but that the people of Kemprath may choose him for their pastor, and that he may be able to make up to them for the havoc which his father made among their temporal concerns ?’ ”

“ Not very likely,” I observed.

“ Well, I don't know,” said the doctor. “ Will you believe me when I tell you that the Kemprath people have shown an increasing sympathy and interest in the boy since the pastor adopted him? After Laubach's death, you must know, matters greatly changed for the better at Kemprath. Pastor Hempel's successor is a worthy man, and an excellent Christian teacher. The people are now quite ashamed of their conduct to the boy too. The pastor's generosity has opened their eyes to their own heartless and narrow-minded resentment. They have frequently entreated him to send the boy back to them, promising to give him an excellent education, but, of course, he has declined. Seeing this, they have from time to time sent him several presents for the boy, both in money and in kind. They say that the whole town is unanimous in admitting that he had been wronged in a very

shabby manner, and that everybody is willing to do something to redress the wrong."

Next morning I could not forbear looking with intense interest at Bernhard. He was really a fine boy. A heaven full of innocence and sincerity lay in his large blue eyes. His high forehead, and a certain mobility round his mouth, expressed at once sharpness of intellect and deep feeling. It was evident that the pastor had rescued a costly and brilliant jewel from destruction.

The pastor was up and in his study at six. He usually spends two hours there before breakfast. These hours are devoted to the purely administrative part of his office, such as keeping the register of the births, deaths, and marriages, writing out certificates, and the minutes of the presbytery and the school board; and reading and answering various letters received from the government or ecclesiastical boards. He called this work "the heaviest burden of his day," because there was so much in it that reminded him of his earthly masters, and so little that drew him up towards the heavenly one. I fully sympathized with him in this, and I really pitied him when he assured me that in addition to his morning hours, he had to devote many a night to this labour, the greater portion of which, in my opinion, had better be delegated to a police or vestry clerk.

"The doctor has told me Bernhard's story," I said

to him after breakfast. "Will you allow me to add a little mite to the gifts which you have received towards his support and education?"

"Gladly," he answered; "but do you know the real object for which money is received now?"

He produced a book from a drawer, and showed me a list of the gifts that had come in, and told me what he had done with them. It was a large list, and there were considerable sums among the subscriptions. He told me that not a farthing of this money had been expended upon Bernhard's support—as he would not allow any one to share this with himself; but a fund had been created which would enable Bernhard to study at the university. The amount required for this purpose had already been obtained. As, however, gifts still continued to pour in abundantly, he informed his Kemprath friends of the state of things, and told them that since Bernhard was not in need of the money, he would devote it to the support of other poor orphans. This was heartily approved of, and a fund was formed called "The Bernhard Fund," from which at present as many as nine orphans are being supported. They are boarded out with Christian families in the neighbourhood. Bernhard, of course, was appointed superintendent of the society, under the guidance of the pastor and his wife, and he devotes the greater portion of his leisure hours to visiting them, accompanied by the pastor.

"Could you not allow me to accompany you and Bernhard on one of your visits?" I asked.

"Oh, by all means," was the answer. "This afternoon is a half-holiday at school, and we will request mother to have dinner ready early, that we may have a very long afternoon."

The church clock struck two just as our little caravan left the parsonage. Bernhard and the minister's son Henry walked in front, carrying a cradle between them. There was no baby in it of course, but it contained everything requisite to make a baby comfortable, as well as presents for the children and their foster parents. The pastor and the doctor, smoking their long meerschaums, followed, and as they puffed away we could see that they were engaged in a lively conversation. I had the honour of bringing up the rear by the side of my kind hostess, "die Frau Pastorin."

It was a beautiful summer day. The sky was just cloudy enough to temper the scorching rays of the sun, and the clouds just sufficiently transparent to allow the sunshine to paint its marvels of light and shade on hill and valley, field and forest. Our road was one of those broad, well-constructed chaussées for which Prussia is famous, and it led us by many gentle windings from the bottom of the valley up to the high level of the tableland. A most charming panorama here presented itself to our view. As it was con-

tinuous uphill work, we were fully an hour traversing the distance. Sometime we would pause and wipe our faces, and look behind to get a glimpse of the valley from a new point, and on each occasion might be heard the same exclamatory remark, "Isn't it beautiful!"

"Are there many abandoned or neglected children in this neighbourhood?" I asked my hostess as we were slowly pacing up the hill.

"Not in the parish itself," she answered, "but some do come from other districts, and some are sent by charitable friends, who desire us to shelter them and give them training."

"Why do they come here?" I asked. "Is this parish so wealthy or liberal that it is looked upon as an El Dorado by vagabonds?"

"Very far from that!" she answered. "This is a poor place; inhabited by people who, with few exceptions, have to work hard to earn their daily bread. But it lies on the main route between Arensberg and Münster, and beggars going from one to the other often stop here for a short time to work in the quarry. But when they leave the place again it frequently happens that they leave some of their children behind. I am glad to say that in the village itself there are scarcely any cases of real pauperism or destitution. The orphans are taken care of by the church. They are boarded out in an orphan house at the church's

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expense. This orphanage is in one of the large towns in the neighbourhood. As for the other children, they are pretty well cared for by their parents. The burgomaster and my husband are friends, you know, and where the burgomaster and the pastor work together in a parish, you will always find order in the streets and peace in the houses."

"Ah!" I said. "Then I suppose your husband has all the children of the parish completely under his control, so that none of them are ever missing from the Sunday-school."

"We have no Sunday-school," she said quickly.

"Really!" I exclaimed, in a tone of surprise. "Have you *no* Sunday-school?"

"No, we have not," she answered with a smile, and evidently much amused at my astonishment.

"And why not, if I may ask the question?"

"Because there is no need for it in this place. Besides, my husband is no friend to Sunday-schools, and the children receive religious instruction one hour every day at the ordinary school."

"But are there not many who do not go to school?" I asked.

"Not one. School-education is compulsory in this country. The parents are obliged by law to send their children to school. If they neglect to do so, they are fined or imprisoned. So there is not a single child here above six years old that cannot read the Bible."

“But did I not hear your husband say last night that he was not quite content with the spirit in which the schoolmaster gives biblical instruction?”

“That’s true; but he holds a catechization of the elder children once a week himself, in which he instructs them in the doctrines of religion. Besides, the schoolmaster’s teaching is not so much positively wrong as negatively deficient. He only leaves the children *ignorant* of the main truths of the Gospel; and this void is filled up by my husband’s catechizations.”

“And the pastor gives them that instruction on a week day?” I asked.

“He does. It would be too much for him on a Sunday, as he preaches twice that day.”

“I see,” I said after a pause, “that you do not need a Sunday-school. In my country there are thousands of children who would never hear a word about Christ and salvation, were it not for the Sunday-schools.”

“Ah! that makes all the difference!” said the Frau Pastorin. “In your country, I suppose, the children are not compelled to go to school. I can fancy in that case that the children of the poor would grow up without any education at all. To them Sunday-school must be a great boon.”

“It is not only for poor and ragged children,” said the pastor, who had overheard us, “that you keep Sunday schools in your country, but, if I am not mis-

taken, for the children of members of your churches, and of regular attendants at your religious services."

"Yes, it is so," I answered. "We desire *all* the children to attend the Sunday-school."

"That seems sad," said the pastor. "It shows that neither the parents nor the clergymen know their duty in this respect."

"That's rather a grave accusation," I said.

"It may seem so, but I don't think it an unjust one. Let me explain myself. I fully approve of parents sending their children to schools on week days, to learn reading, writing, &c. Many parents have neither the time nor the ability to teach these things to their children themselves, being occupied from morning till night, and often deficient in the necessary knowledge as well. But if on a Sunday, when he has all his time to himself, a man sends his child to a school to get it taught what he ought to teach it himself, I say he is neglecting his Christian duty. Such a man lays on other people's shoulders a work which God has specially committed to him as a father. Your clergymen ought earnestly to rebuke such parents for their slothfulness; and, in my opinion, they are to be rebuked themselves because they countenance such Sunday-school going."

"There is truth in that," cried the doctor. "I suppose," he went on, turning to me, "you send your children to the Sunday-schools in the afternoon, that

you may enjoy your nap undisturbed. While the poor Sunday-school teacher is toiling in a close school-room, to teach a score or two of peevish-looking, drowsy children, whom he sees only once a week, their fathers and mothers are comfortably stretched on sofas or easy chairs, luxuriating in the arms of Morpheus."

"Just so," said the pastor, sarcastically; "in England Sunday-school teachers form a sort of separate caste. To them the fourth commandment does not apply. 'Seven days shalt thou labour' is what they regard themselves as having been commanded to do."

"Well," I said, "I agree with you that it would be very desirable that Sunday-schools should be superseded by religious instruction at home. But you know very well that all parents are not fit for that task."

"All the Sunday-school teachers are quite fit, I suppose," rejoined the pastor dryly. "Is there such a thing in your country as an examination of the young men and women who become Sunday-school teachers, as to their knowledge and their ability to give religious instruction?"

"No, not so far as I am aware," I replied. "Of course the ministers would reject any they knew to be plainly unfit. But the teaching is not so very difficult after all. The teacher does not require to go

deep. A Bible story, a text or hymn, or a portion of the Catechism—that is all.”

“Very well,” said the pastor; “that is the greater reason why it should be left to the parents at home. He must be a blockhead of a father who could not sit down with his children for an hour, and read a story in the Bible, talk with them about it, and make them learn a text or a hymn.”

“I admit that they ought to do it, of course,” I answered; “but we cannot compel the parents.”

“Perhaps the parents would come to attend to this matter,” said the pastor, “if your ministers did away with the Sunday-schools, and pressed it upon the consciences of the parents to instruct their children. Sunday-schools should only be open for vagabonds, for neglected children, or for children of irreligious parents. A Christian man ought to be ashamed to send his child to a Sunday-school. It is a public confession on his part that he is either too lazy or too stupid to teach his children himself.”

I must confess that I felt a little put out at this; I never had looked upon Sunday-schools in that light.

“But,” I said, aiming at the pastor a bullet from his own gun, “do the parents in *your* church teach their children on Sunday?”

“There is no necessity for any such thing with us,” he answered. “Our children get plenty of religious instruction during the week, as I told you.”

“So you leave your children without any religious instruction on Sunday?”

“Not at all. They attend morning and evening service. I must confess, however, that I am not quite satisfied with this arrangement. Services which are suitable for adults cannot possibly be well adapted for children. I have some thoughts of instituting services for the children, to be conducted at the same time as the regular services for the adults, in a room adjoining the church.”

“I think that is an excellent plan,” said the doctor. “I believe nothing tends more to inspire children with aversion to religion than forcing them to attend services of which they scarcely understand anything.”

Our conversation now turned upon the question as to which was the best way of getting children to spend Sunday well. Our opinions differed very much on this point. The pastor contended that the Christian Sunday had nothing whatever to do with the fourth commandment, and that it was not a divine but merely an ecclesiastical institution. This manner of viewing the Lord's day of course could not fail to bear upon the way in which the children were allowed to spend it. The pastor expressed himself very strongly in favour of the Sunday as a day of rest. Though we were not commanded by the Lord to celebrate the day, yet he fully acknowledged the wisdom of setting apart one day in seven for rest and relaxation, both

spiritual and bodily. That a portion of the day should be devoted to religious worship was, in his opinion, what the Christian would paramountly desire. Nor was this incompatible with the notion of a day of *rest*, inasmuch as to the saved sinner, who loves his God, divine worship is not a work, but an enjoyment. But for that very reason, divine service, he said, should be so conducted for children as to bring them to love it as an enjoyment. Another part of the day, he held, ought to be devoted, not to pleasure-making, but to reasonable and healthy recreation—such as walking in the fields, homely gatherings, or visiting friends in a quiet, familiar way. The children should, accordingly, be allowed to play and have their games, so as to come to look upon the Sunday as a privilege and a blessing.

As I perceived that all here turned upon the question whether the Sunday was a day set apart by God or by man, I began to argue with the pastor about the divinity of the institution. We had not got far into this controversy, however, when following a footpath, we came into a cultivated field, where we stopped at a little cottage, evidently inhabited by a small farmer and his family. There was a little flower-garden at the side of the house, surrounded by a hedge, and containing some flowers and fruit-trees. Not far from the front door was a well mouth, enclosed by a stone fence, across which lay a wooden cylinder, provided

with an iron handle, by which a pitcher could be let down and drawn up. Owing to the vicinity of this well, the little space before the front door was very wet and muddy, notwithstanding the hot summer weather. In order that we might not wet our feet, we turned round the house to enter by the back door. Here we had to take great care not to tumble over pails or pots, or such like articles, which lay about in great confusion. Three little girls of from three to five sat a short way off, so busily engaged in making tarts and cakes of sand that they did not notice us. Through the open window we saw a fourth of about fourteen, seated at a loom weaving a piece of coarse linen. The little apartment, which was partly filled by her loom, appeared also to serve as a bedroom. It communicated with a kitchen, in which a woman of about forty was engaged in cutting carrots. No sooner did she notice the pastor than a smile passed over her face, and hurriedly throwing the carrots into a corner, she hastened to meet us at the door.

“Ah, Herr Pastor and Frau Pastorin, is it you? How happy I am to see you! Are you well? And how are the children? What a pity my husband is not in just now! But please step in and take a seat. You must be tired after your long walk.”

So she went on, not giving us any opportunity to throw in a word. Opening a door, she invited us to step into the front parlour. This apartment was very

untidy, quite in keeping with what I had noticed outside. There was scarcely a chair in the room which did not want repair, and on which something or other did not lie that ought to have been somewhere else.

The woman, however, was very kind and good-natured. Having cleared the chairs simply by throwing on the floor everything that had been lying upon them, she soon got us seated. Leaving us alone for a while, she rushed into the kitchen to speak to her daughter Hanchen. The Frau Pastorin, however, stopped her in this conversation, for, as it seemed, she guessed the subject of it. Raising her voice, which could easily be heard through the open door, she said,—

“Pray, don’t make coffee, Frau Walhoff, as we shan’t stay so long as that.”

“Oh, only a single cup!” cried Frau Walhoff. “It’ll do you good after your walk.”

“No, we had rather not, we can’t stay,” cried the pastor.

“Oh yes! you must take something,” returned our invisible hostess. Presently Hanchen made her appearance, a large kettle in her hand. She was on her way to the well—the nearest way to it being through the room in which we were sitting. Here, however, she was stopped by the Frau Pastorin, who placed herself at the door, so that the girl was pre-

vented from opening it. Her mother now came to her assistance, but seeing that the pastor and his wife were determined to resist, she gave up the attempt.

"You had better give us a cup of milk," said the pastor.

While Frau Walhoff went to the kitchen to bring some milk, Hanchen went down to the back-yard to fetch little Gretel, the youngest of the three children we had noticed playing in the sand. Gretel was the foster-child, and consequently the chief object of our visit. She was a stout, healthy little girl of three, very dirty, however, her face being all besmeared with earth, which her tears turned into mud. She was very shy, and did not at all relish giving up her play for the company of strange people.

"You should have washed her face," said Frau Walhoff, who now came up with the milk. And taking the child back to the kitchen, she quickly submitted her to as much of washing, combing, and brushing as was possible in present circumstances.

The child, having been thus made presentable, was first brought to Bernhard, who, as president of the society, was of course entitled to the first look. He took the crying child on his knee, and soon made a smile rise on her face by presenting her with a little doll out of the cradle. But poor Bernhard had to stand a good deal of teasing, on our finding out that he was quite a hand at nursing babies. He took it

very good-humouredly, and answered that as babies were as much human beings as grown men, he deemed it his duty to treat them in a respectful manner, and that we ought to apologize if we caused them to pout or cry.

Meanwhile the Frau Pastorin brought out of the cradle a parcel of baby-clothes, which she handed over to Hanchen. The two other little girls, whom their mother had washed in the meantime, were also called and spoken to, and Bernhard presented each of them with a cake and a little picture-book. The Frau Pastorin spoke to Hanchen, to whom she gave some hints with reference to the training of the little girl. As this conversation was conducted in an undertone, I could not follow the whole of it, but from the little that I did pick up, I learned that Hanchen was especially intrusted with the care of little Gretel, and that the Frau Pastorin very strongly pressed upon her the necessity of keeping the child clean and tidy. The Frau Pastorin's remarks, though uttered in a very kind tone, brought tears into Hanchen's eyes.

While the Frau Pastorin was conversing with Hanchen, the pastor spoke to her mother. The woman complained very much of the difficulties she and her husband had to contend with in bringing up their family in a respectable way. Still, she said that with the help of the Lord, who had never for-

saken her, she was quite confident that she would get through.

Commonplace as these observations were, they did not appear to be so to the good woman herself. Tears came into her eyes as she spoke. It was evident that she was a serious-minded person, who knew her Bible well, and took a pleasure in talking of things unseen. Still all this did not seem to satisfy the pastor, who observed that "people got into many afflictions through faults of their own, and that in those cases the Lord did not deliver them simply because they could deliver themselves if they only chose to do so."

"Oh, I know what you mean, Herr Pastor," said the woman, blushing, "you refer to the ground at the front being wet. But it is not our fault that it is still in such a condition. When you advised my husband, last year, to raise it by a cartload of gravel——"

"Let us not go into that just now," the pastor broke in, with a kind tone. "Besides the ground near the well, there are other things about which we have occasionally spoken to you. But I will come some evening and have a little talk with you when your husband is in."

"I *do* hope you have no thought of taking the darling away from us," said the woman, her eyes filling with tears.

"I hope not," answered the pastor, gravely. "But we'll talk about that when I come back."

When we had left the house the pastor told me the history of that family. They were very good, kind-hearted people, most ready to assist their neighbours. The husband was an excellent fellow, very diligent and careful, a clever farmer, and as honest as gold. The pastor counted this couple amongst the most advanced members of his church as regards spiritual knowledge. It might have been reasonably expected that such people, through the prosperity of their circumstances, would confirm the apostle's saying that godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise not only of the life which is to come, but also of that which now is. And, indeed, Walhoff would have been a comparatively well-to-do man, had there not been one evil gnawing at the root of his household, and eating up the greater portion of the profits of his work. That evil was his wife's slovenliness—of which vice he himself was not quite free. As, owing to this sinful habit, they not only injured themselves, but also did despite to the name of Christ, whom they professed to love, the pastor had often pondered what could be done to bring them to a sense of their duty in this respect. Sometimes he had preached on cleanliness and orderliness as being Christian duties and virtues, and once or twice he had, when on a pastoral visit, thrown out hints to them. These, it is true, made the woman blush at the moment, but were forgotten almost as

soon as heard. Seeing that these efforts had no effect, he had almost resolved on leaving the family alone, when the Bernhard Society came into existence. Had it not been for their slovenly habits, the Walhoffs were just such a family as was wanted for the purpose, since they had little children of their own, with whom they might easily train up an additional child. It was one of the society's objects to look out as far as practicable for families in which there were children of the same age as that of the children to be boarded out, and who were likely to take a child in the spirit of Christian charity, and not merely for profit. The Walhoffs were well known for their kindhearted and charitable character. Yet, notwithstanding all these excellences, the pastor had for a long time dismissed every thought of intrusting a child to them. But one day it occurred to him that the Bernhard Society ought to try to answer two purposes at one time, or, as the proverb has it, to kill two birds with one stone. While trying to train the children through the people, it should also aim at training the people through the children. Now, the Walhoffs unquestionably required training. There would not be much harm done to a child of say two or three years of age if it were boarded out for six or twelve months with slovenly but kind-hearted people. The fact of the child's being intrusted to them by the Society would give the pastor and his wife a right,

as its chief agents, to visit the family frequently and take some control of the child's education. So little Gretel had been given to them nine months ago, at one dollar (three shillings) a-week, the Society finding the child's clothing. They took the little girl with the greatest pleasure, and soon came to love her as much as their own children. Since then the pastor and his wife had often visited them, and had spoken to them about the way to train up children. Of course they were told in a kind, gentle way that there was a serious defect in their family life which ought to be remedied. Nor were the remarks thus frankly uttered altogether in vain. It could not be denied that some improvement was noticeable. The appearance of the house and of the children had been far worse nine months before than it was now, though it was still bad enough. It was the daughter, Hanchen, upon whom the observations of the pastor and his wife appeared to take most effect. Good influence had been already exercised on the family, to this extent at least, that the daughter was imbued with such notions of cleanliness and order as were likely to guard her against falling into her mother's fault. Nor did he doubt but that the mother too would unlearn a great deal. It was not his intention to take the child away from them, but on a former occasion he had hinted at it, just to stimulate them to a little more self-improvement. It was touching

to witness the intense grief so slight an allusion to the child's possible withdrawal caused them. They said they would rather keep the child entirely themselves—nay, would even pay something to the society for it, than part with it.

As we proceeded on our rounds, we passed another cottage, in the doorway of which a kind-looking woman was standing. She dropped us a reverential curtsey.

“Good afternoon, Frau Diemrich,” said the pastor. “And how is your father to-day?”

“Still very poorly,” was the answer. “Will you not step in and see him, Herr Pastor?”

“Not now, but I will come and see you some evening this week.”

“That is an excellent woman,” said the pastor, as we went on, “and her husband is one of the noblest fellows I ever met with. They have four children, the youngest being a boy of ten. We should be very glad to board out two neglected boys of the same age with them, but unhappily the husband's father lives with them, and he is an inveterate drunkard. This has hitherto prevented us from intrusting a child to their care. But the old man was taken very ill lately, and I do not expect that he will recover; so we have only temporarily boarded out the two boys with our sexton, where they are to remain till old Diemrich dies.”

"I see you are very particular in the choice of families," I remarked.

"Certainly," answered the pastor. "We not only take notice of the character of the heads of a family, but also of those of the other members, and even of those in their employment."

"So some amongst your families are in a position to employ others?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. You see that cottage," he said, pointing to a neat little house in front of us, "we are going to call there now. The man is a shoemaker, and has two men at work with him. He is in tolerably good circumstances. He has five children, the eldest a boy of twelve. We have boarded a lad of thirteen there, to learn shoemaking. The man and his wife are both thorough Christians, and the workmen are respectable young fellows. In short, it is a very good family."

It was a small farmhouse, well-built and kept in thorough repair. Everything round about looked clean and orderly. A passage divided the house into two equal parts. To the left was the family sitting-room, to the right the workshop. Through the open window we saw two strong healthy fellows, and two lads with them, beating the leather and plying their needle, accompanying their work with a cheerful tune. The master—a broad-shouldered, sinewy man, with an open face and piercing eyes—met us with kind greetings in the doorway, and ushered us into his private

sitting-room, where his wife was busily engaged at needlework, her foot on the rocker of a cradle, in which a baby was sleeping.

“Oh, Herr Pastor and Frau Pastorin!” cried she, as she cheerfully started from her seat. “So you have come at last. That’s right! And now you will take your coffee with us, won’t you?”

“Gladly, gladly!” answered the pastor and his wife.

It was not long before everything for this simple repast was ready. There was a large stone coffee-pot, and a gigantic loaf of rye-bread, known as the famous Westphalian “Pompernickel,” as well as a loaf of snow-white wheaten bread, together with ham and sausage, and plenty of butter, milk, and sugar. During the first few minutes there was little talk, for, to tell the truth, we were all so hungry that our tongues refused to attend to any business save that of eating.

In the meantime the shoemaker’s son Albert made his appearance, accompanied by his friend Johann, the “Bernard-child” we had come to visit. Johann was a very nice-looking lad, so honest in face and expression that it was agreeable to look at him. The pastor asked him some questions as to his health, and the Frau Pastorin produced a new cap from the cradle, which made him as happy as a king. He did not remain long in the room, however, for Bernhard and

the pastor's son Henry, who were of the same age, took him and Albert away into the garden, which soon resounded with the merry noise of their vociferous play.

The shoemaker and his wife now told us all we desired to know about Johann's conduct and progress. In fact, the pastor did not need to put questions, for they were but too glad to talk about the lad. It appeared that they looked upon his stay at their house as a blessing of God. Not only was he very docile and obedient, but was seriously inclined towards religion. This was a cause of great joy to them, as the lad, when some two years ago he entered their house for the first time, was destitute of any religious knowledge whatever. And what especially made them look upon his stay in their house as a blessing, was the fact that his conversation and example had exercised a most beneficial influence upon their own children. To Albert, their eldest son, especially, Johann had proved a source of incalculable good. Albert had been rather saucy and rebellious, inclined to disbelieve everything except what he saw with his own eyes, and to distrust everybody. Their hearts had often been filled with anxiety on account of these evil symptoms in their boy's character. But a great change for good had taken place since Johann had come amongst them.

These were very gratifying particulars as to the

effect of Christian training upon a poor neglected boy, and we were led to discuss the evils which might be brought about by a too doctrinal and too systematic method of education. The pastor gave many important hints with reference to this subject. "Nothing," he said, "trains so well as practice. Tell a child that he must become a Christian, and you will, in many cases, provoke contradiction and opposition. Show a child that you are a Christian yourself, and you unconsciously touch its conscience and lead it to follow your example.

Our next visit was to a widow who had two of the society's babies under her care. Here Bernhard left the cradle, with the remainder of its contents. After having exchanged a few kind words with the poor woman, we resumed our walk homewards, which we reached about nightfall. Among the letters the post had brought was one from Kemprath, containing fifty dollars (£7, 10s.) for the Bernhard fund, and another from Münster, requesting the admission of a poor neglected little girl, who was in danger of falling into the hands of Roman Catholic priests. The pastor gave both letters to Bernhard, who had to keep them till the ensuing monthly meeting of the committee, which was to come on in a few days.

I regretted that my time did not allow me to stay for the purpose of attending the meeting, to which the pastor cordially invited me.

“And how did you like our visit?” asked the doctor next morning, when we were on our way back.

“I shall never forget this place,” I answered. “Great and important truths have here been brought home to my heart, and among them this one—that charity, starting from a living faith in Christ, manifests itself in its purest character where it avoids everything like show, and keeps as close as possible to nature.”

THE CHARCOAL BURNERS.

THAT portion of the Sudetic mountain-chain which crosses the northern frontier of Moravia, and projects far into the southern districts of Silesia, is covered with a dense forest at a height of some 3,500 or 4,000 feet above the level of the sea. The scenery, though at many places as romantic as that of the Rhine, and as picturesque as that of Saxon Switzerland, is yet but little known. This is chiefly owing to the fact that the district lies rather out of the way, affording no thoroughfare except towards the sandy and barren plains of south-western Poland. The tourist is seldom seen here, and the sound of the hunter's bugle is as seldom heard. But the strokes of the axe resound from morning till dusk, and you ever and anon hear the crash of the falling trees, and see thick greyish columns of smoke rising up from open spots where women and children are setting fire to piles of wood.

This is the district of the charcoal burners, or, as they call themselves for brevity's sake, the *brenner*, *i.e.*, the burners. They number about a couple of thousand people, and are scattered over an area of some ten miles. They live in wooden huts built among the trees. Although their trade yields but a scanty profit, yet those of them who are diligent and economical, succeed in attaining to comparative prosperity. These for the most part have a garden behind their hut, and a piece of land on a neighbouring slope, where they can feed a cow and grow potatoes. But the number of this class is not very large. By far the greater portion pass their life in poverty. There are among them three great enemies to happiness. The first is intemperance. The wants of the people being few, the greater part of the wages earned during summer might be saved for the winter, but to most of this people the art of saving is as unknown as is the art of skating to the Ashantees. Instead of buying corn or potatoes, they buy spirits, chiefly a kind of potato-gin, which, being of very inferior quality, not only intoxicates them, but ruins their constitution. This enemy of course prepares the way for the second—disease. Nor is the climate a healthy one. On the east lie the Polish marshes, sending up obnoxious exhalations, which even the mountain breeze is oftentimes unable to dispel. On the other sides is the dense forest, through which at many places a ray of

sunlight never penetrates. A cold, damp atmosphere is thus generated, which propagates rheumatic fever, with its long retinue of complaints. But many of these evils might be prevented; nay, the district itself might be made one of the healthiest in Silesia, were there not a third enemy, who stoutly opposes every attempt at improvement. This is ignorance, with its inseparable ally, prejudice.

Having scarcely any intercourse with the people of the valleys, and having been left to themselves for centuries, the charcoal burners form quite a separate community. From time to time they are visited by the clergymen of the neighbouring parishes, and on solemn occasions, when there is a marriage, a baptism, or a funeral, they go down to hear a sermon. But these religious excursions occur only about a dozen of times in the course of a man's life. The long distance is deemed a sufficient excuse for staying away from church in summer, while the state of the roads makes descent impossible, at least for women and children, in winter. As to education, matters are still worse. There is no such thing as a school-house, and even though there were, it would be unoccupied during the greater portion of the year, as the children, both boys and girls, from their fourth or fifth year, are needed by their parents to aid in gathering sticks, or in filling bags with coal. When they get a little stronger they are employed in carrying loads on their

heads down to the village. In winter, perhaps, they may have a few months to attend school; and there are some of the parents who care sufficiently for the instruction of their children to give them a few lessons in reading and writing, or to pay a wandering school-master to assist in this arduous work. But these cases are rare. The great bulk of the youthful population grow up like the children of savages, without God and without Christ in the world.

As you ascend the mountain from the village of Thorlau, on the western side of the range, you feel grateful for the comforts of a tolerably well-paved road, which, for upwards of a mile, winds up in gentle zigzags till you reach a plateau, affording a most splendid view of the Oder valley. On this plateau a few houses have been built, and form a hamlet named *Birtschweg*. Here you will find a public-house, with a baker's, a grocer's, and a carpenter's shop. The carpenter, though last, is not least. He must be a wonderful man, for he is also smith, bricklayer, painter, and glazier. Here the burners always "halt" when they come down with the bag of charcoal on their head from their lofty residence, which is some fifteen hundred feet higher up. And here it is they supply themselves, at the public-house, with that vigour which they think is required to enable them to carry their burden down to Thorlau. Here it is, too, that they halt in coming up again, their bags now empty under

their arms, to buy provisions, and such nails and tools as they require from the smith. Too often, also, they revisit the public-house, lest they should faint in their toilsome uphill walk. And indeed, were we to admit that brandy is indispensable to enable people to scramble up steep mountains, then great excuse might be urged for the burners. The roads, or I should rather say the footpaths, that lead from Birtschweg to their huts are so precipitous, that even the long-experienced skill of the burners does not always preserve them from accidents. True, Michael Stehelin, the carpenter of Birtschweg, often told them that their accidents would be far fewer if they would only try to ascend without seeking aid from the brandy-bottle. But he was not believed by the burner population, and they would have liked him all the better if he had only kept his opinion more to himself.

One day, as Michael was walking up the road from Thorlau, he overtook a burner's boy of about fourteen years old, who was returning home, carrying a bottle of medicine.

"Anything the matter with you, Henni?"

"No, not with me, Master Michael, but with daddy. He has got the fever again, and is very ill. I am afraid he'll soon be 'round the corner' if matters don't take a turn."

"Round the corner? What do you mean?"

"Why, dead of course."

Michael could not help smiling at this, melancholy as the subject was.

"Yes; but why do you call dying going 'round a corner?'" he inquired.

The boy was silent. This question had never been put to him before.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "I think it is because, you know, nobody ever comes back. They just disappear like a man turning round a corner."

"And d'ye think it's a pleasant place round the corner?" asked Michael.

"Can't tell," said the boy; "never been there."

"I know," said Michael.

The boy said nothing, and they walked on a few steps in silence.

"I know what places are round the corner," Michael repeated.

Still, however, the boy gave no reply. The matter did not seem to interest him at all. Michael sighed. "What dead indifference!" he thought.

"Do you know anything about the Saviour?" he asked.

"No, I do not," was the answer.

"Can you read?"

"No."

When they arrived at Birtschweg the boy went into a public-house, from which Michael saw him emerge with a second bottle in his hand.

The carpenter went to his home in a sad mood of mind.

"Dinah," he said to his wife, "matters are not getting any better up among the burners. They die like the beasts of the field."

He then told her about his meeting with little Henni.

"I never wondered at matters being as they are up there," said she, "when there is neither church nor school. And I have often said that we ought to do something in the way of trying to supply them with these."

On the following day a little girl, a sister of Henni's, called.

"Kind greetings from daddy," she said, "and as Master Michael said he knew it, daddy has sent me to ask whether he would be kind enough to say how it was, as daddy was much worse."

Michael did not at first catch her meaning.

"Oh! it's about the corner," said the girl.

"Ah! I see," cried Michael, as if a light had suddenly risen before his eyes; "I see. Say to your father I'll call this afternoon, and tell him all I know about it."

After dinner Michael took his walking-stick to set out on his uphill walk.

"Do speak to him about God and something better than this life," said his wife, "and also see whether

something cannot be done in the way of a school. I should very much like to do something among the girls, at any rate."

Michael found Henni's father in a dangerous condition. The poor man was evidently not far from death. Perhaps medical skill might still save him, but there was no doctor to be got except from Thorlau at a great expense. The sick man was anxious about the future. Henni's having said that Master Michael had assured him he knew what places were on the other side of the dark gulf, had set him a-thinking seriously. It had occupied his mind through the sleepless night. He was very desirous to know what Master Michael could tell him about eternity, as he had no doubt he would very soon leave this life.

"There is a good place, and there is a bad one," said Michael. "Heaven is a place of great happiness. Our God is there, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy angels, and all the good people who have loved the Lord Jesus, and faithfully served him on earth. They are always and for ever happy, and of the brightness of their glory we can form no idea. But hell is a place of utter darkness and of great pain. The devil is there, and his angels, and all the wicked and unbelieving who have been disobedient to God and lived a life of sin. It is a place of everlasting punishment for all who have done evil and repented not."

The invalid folded his hands and shut his eyes, as if trying to realize the full force of Michael's words. Then, opening his eyes, he looked with an expression of grave concern.

"D'ye know which place I am going to?" he asked with a faltering voice.

"Don't ask *me* that," Michael answered; "ask it of yourself. You know better than I do how you have lived, what you have done, and whom you have served—whether God or the devil."

"I am afraid there is not much hope for me," he sighed, after a pause.

"I think not, if you look only to yourself," said Michael. "But if you would look up to Jesus you will see that there is a way of escape even for the greatest of sinners, if he only confesses his sins, repents, and gives himself to God."

"I have heard of Jesus," said the invalid. "He is the Saviour, I understand. But I don't know much about Him."

Michael now told him the story of the Gospel, as far as he could do this in half an hour's time, and without tiring the weak man too much. Henni, and his mother and sister, listened with great attention.

"And so you believe that Jesus died for me, and suffered for my sins?" asked the invalid.

"Yes, I most assuredly believe that," said Michael.

"Then what am I to do?"

“You have only to go to Jesus and confess your sins to Him, thank Him for His love to you, and turn away your heart from sin, and look out with delight for the glory that shall be revealed to you.”

Michael thereupon read a few verses from the Bible in confirmation of what he had said.

“If you were able to read I should leave the book with you,” he said, “but it would be of no use now.”

“Oh, what a loss not to be able to read!” cried the invalid. “When I was a boy my father often urged me to learn, but I did not think it worth the trouble.”

“Is there none of your neighbours who can read a chapter to you?”

“Not one. There are a few burners who can read, but they live too far away.”

“Henni,” said the sick man, “you must at once learn to read, and when you are able to do it, you’ll teach your sister.”

“But how am I to learn?” Henni asked, in a desponding tone.

“I will teach you, if you will come down to Birtschweg,” said Michael. “When you pass with the coal to Thorlau you can call and spend an hour with me. That will do you more good than sitting in the public-house and learning to poison your brains with brandy.”

Next day Henni presented himself in the carpenter’s room for his first lesson. Not Michael, but his wife,

was the teacher. She thought there was no necessity for her husband troubling himself about work which she could do equally well. Even had she said she could do it better than him, she would have told nothing more than the plain truth. Such, at least, was Michael's opinion. She cut an alphabet out of an old book, stuck the letters on pieces of pasteboard, and contrived in this way to make a kind of primer. Henni gave no promise of proving a prodigy; but still he gave every hope of turning out fairly.

"Henni," said Frau Stehelin, "I think you might as well bring your sister Machteld with you next time. She may profit by the lesson as much as you, and no loss to any one. That would be killing two birds with one stone, you see."

A few days later, Machteld, who was a handy girl of twelve, came with her brother, and sat by his side in Michael's sitting-room, trying to get to the bottom of the *b a, ba, b o, bo, b u, bu*. After the lesson she remained with Frau Stehelin, waiting for Henni's return from Thorlau, where he had gone with the coal.

"Machteld," said Frau Stehelin, "you might as well do a bit of knitting till your brother comes back."

"But I can't knit," said Machteld.

"Well, then, I'll teach you."

In a trice knitting needles and worsted were produced from the table-drawer, and Machteld tried to wind the thread round the needles as her teacher

showed her, wondering all the while how in the world a stocking could ever come out of this.

“Patience, my girl, patience,” cried Frau Stehelin, as Machteld, in her haste and anxiety, unravelled the thread. “Prague and Vienna were not built in one day. Only keep steadily at it, and when you know how to knit a stocking, I will teach you how to sew. But let us sing a song just now ; it cheers us up for work, you know. Listen, and repeat what I say after me ; and when you know it, we will sing it :—

“Jesus, oh Thou lovest me,
Me to save is Thy delight ;
Help me to rejoice in Thee,
And to serve Thee day and night.”

In this way Machteld learnt to knit and to sew, as well as to sing hymns and tell stories from the Bible. Henni was quite surprised when, as they were walking home, she told him all she had heard and done.

“You might teach me these hymns on the road home,” said Henni.

Machteld had no objection ; and not many days elapsed before they might be heard singing a well-known sacred tune, as they paced up the footpath leading to their dwelling.

Michael paid two or three more visits to Henni’s father, and he had every ground for hoping they were blessed to the soul of the sick man. He also

visited a few other sick people in the neighbourhood. But he did not meet with much desire to receive the consolations of the Gospel. A report was spread that he was a secret delegate of the Government sent to inquire into their circumstances, that they might be made to pay taxes, from which they had hitherto been exempted. It was also mooted that he was empowered to make them all read and write, by which means they would be obliged to form a separate community, and pay their own burgomaster, clergyman, and schoolmaster.

Michael soon experienced the effects of these absurd reports. The people liked him pretty well as a man, for he was kind, straightforward, and compassionate. Many a family could testify to the liberality with which he had always tried to relieve their distress, since the day he had settled at Birtschweg. They did not receive him unkindly, but they evidently distrusted him. He was anxious that they should send down their children with Henni and Machteld, and he urged them to do so, but they never sent one.

Henni's father died in peace. On the evening of his death, Machteld read a psalm to him and repeated one or two hymns. He said "they were sweet to him as honey; yea, sweeter than the honeycomb." When Henni returned home from his day's work, the dying man requested that they should sing that beautiful hymn, beginning—

“ In Jesus I am living,
Though I be dying here.”

The sweet tones of the melody were still lingering about his bed when he fell asleep. Three days later the funeral took place at Thorlau, and, according to the custom of the land, the widow was present. The clergyman made a long speech at the open grave, and the school-children sang a dirge. The widow wept, but she said that the hymn was not nearly so beautiful as the one the children sang on the evening of her husband's death. “It was all heaven then,” she said, “but here it is all death.”

Henni could not come down so often to Birtschweg after this. His sister had to carry down the coal in his stead; and she too had to discontinue Frau Stehelin's sewing lessons. This was a great disappointment and grief to her, as she liked them exceedingly. She knew as much as enabled her to sew an apron, but not enough to make a petticoat.

Every day many boys and girls passed Henni's mother's door carrying coal to Thorlau, but none of them stepped in, though all were invited. True, many of them envied Henni, when they saw him seated on the bench reading a book, and many a girl, when she witnessed Machteld knitting, stopped and looked at her quick little fingers and wished that she could do the same. But they kept these impressions concealed, as they were told that Henni and Machteld

were only decoys, to allure them into Michael's net. When Michael heard of this he said there was much truth in it, only his net was not of the sort they took it for.

"I have no doubt," said Michael's wife to him one day, "that the children would gradually be prevailed upon to come and be taught, if we opened a school up the hill and invited them to come in the evenings."

"Well, my dear, I don't know," said Michael shaking his head, "the prejudice against us is so very strong. Besides, there is no school-house up there, and even though there were, we should have to stay there over night, as we could not come down after dark."

"I have considered all that, and I'll tell you how it may be done. You must build a school-house—a wooden one, of course—with a bedroom in it, next to Henni's mother's house. We'll spend an evening there once or twice a week and see what can be done. If we succeed in getting a few children, Henni and Machteld will be quite able to occupy them during the other evenings of the week."

Michael gravely shook his head at this proposal.

"I don't know how that will do," he said; "but we can try it: such a school-house is easily enough built, and its cost will not be much. Should it turn out a failure, it can very easily be converted into a dwelling-house for a poor family."

It was not long before the school-room appeared

by the side of Henni's mother's hut. It looked very picturesque and inviting. David, Michael's second son, who built it, painted it of nice oak colour, giving it a blue roof; and it had broad and high windows in the wall, which made it look cheerful, both outside and in.

But Michael's misgivings proved only too well founded. He and his wife went up twice a-week, on Tuesday and on Friday afternoons; but no scholars came to them except Henni and Machteld, with their mother, who was desirous to learn, old though she was. They read a portion of the Bible together, sang a hymn now and then, and talked about what they had been reading. Frau Stehelin helped Machteld and her mother in sewing and knitting. Thus the two families spent very useful and agreeable evenings together; but it was not a school. Not that children were lacking; for little groups of them stood outside listening to the hymns that were being sung inside, and trying to catch a glimpse of what was going on by peeping through the chinks of the shutters. Michael, on noticing this, put the shutters ajar in order that they might see in all the better. Many of them then wished to come inside and sit in the cheerful room, and learn some of the wonderful things taught. But none of them had the courage to do this, though Michael had intimated to their parents that anybody who chose

to come was welcome. And when he went to the door to invite them to step in, they all dispersed and hid themselves behind the trees till he had gone inside again.

At length, much to the joy of Michael and his wife, two or three little children made their appearance. But that was all ; no others came.

“ I cannot understand it,” Frau Stehelin often said. “ Every day I pray the Lord to break down this distressing obstinacy of the people.”

Indeed, Michael and she often knelt down together for that purpose, but hitherto all had been in vain.

“ I know what the devil uses to harden them so,” Henni said one evening ; “ it is the gin and the brandy. They all spend their evenings with the bottle before them, and they also give it to their children. Thus having got a taste for it, the poor creatures like it better than anything else.”

Michael and his wife at last resolved upon giving up the scheme, Henni and Machteld promising to continue to teach the three little children.

But one evening in the following week Henni called on them at Birtschweg, to ask permission to use the school-house as a sick-room for a poor family afflicted sorely by fever. It consisted of a father, a mother, and three children. They had scarcely a handful of straw to lie upon, and their hut was so decayed that both wind and rain had free access to it.

Michael gladly gave his consent, and next day the family were removed to the school-house.

On the following day Michael went up to look after the patients. He found them in the crisis of the fever, without medicine or medical attendance. Machteld and her mother peeped in from time to time to smooth their pillows or hand them a glass of water.

"Dinah," said Michael to his wife on his return, "send a boy down to Thorlau for a bottle of medicine from the doctor. I am afraid hard times are coming on the burners. Disease, I hear, is fast increasing among them."

Next morning Frau Stehelin herself went up, with the bottle of medicine and a basket containing oranges, sugar, raspberry vinegar, and rice.

"Oh, you are an angel from heaven!" cried the sick man, as she administered draughts to him and his family.

"No, I am not an angel," she said; "only a sinful human being like yourselves. It is Jesus, who loveth you, who has sent me to you."

And she sat down by their bed-side, and spoke to them about Him who gave His life for lost sinners.

Leaving the sick-room, she stepped into Machteld's mother's hut with the bag of rice in her hand.

"Frau Rettich," she said to Machteld's mother,

"pray boil some rice. The fever is just going to intermit for an hour or two, and they'll be in need of something to eat."

"Won't they!" answered Frau Rettich. "I don't believe they have got so much as a crumb over their throats these three days."

Machteld stepped in.

"I have just met old Everardt's daughter," she said. "She told me that Tom Plauen, and his wife and children, are also laid up, and Peter Lowitz with his aged mother."

"Alas! alas!" sighed Frau Rettich; "how dreadful! What will be the end of it all? I remember the year 1822, when seven out of ten families were fever stricken, and nineteen persons died in one day."

Frau Stehelin went to the stricken families to mix their draughts for them, and also to give them some medicine and oranges.

"Michael," she said to her husband when she returned in the evening, "we cannot allow those two wretched families to die in destitution. Their huts are mere dens—dark, damp, cold, and filthy. We must get them removed to our school-house. There is room there for seven or eight more beds. I have measured it."

"Then we'll call it the school-house no longer, but the hospital," said Michael.

Next morning, at daybreak, Michael was seen at

work in his shop with his sons and servants. In a few hours eight bedsteads were put together, roughly of course, but still substantially. Before ten o'clock Frau Stehelin was back from Thorlau, bringing blankets and calico for sheets. She had also called upon some friends in the village, and had got six pillows and two mattresses. These were not sufficient, of course, but she had brought plenty of calico to make moss-beds. Two young friends had also come along with her to help her to sew.

Thus the school-house was unexpectedly changed into an infirmary, which was very soon filled. Frau Stehelin remained to superintend. She slept in Frau Rettich's hut, and spent all her time in her little hospital, assisted by her husband, who came up every morning, and Machteld.

But the disease made fearful progress, especially among the poor and neglected families. The misery was heartrending.

One morning Michael came up from Birtschweg with his sons and the whole band of his servants, carrying tools and boards. Before the sun set a lofty wooden building was erected at a few yards distance from the little hospital. It was capable of containing about thirty bedsteads. These were put together the next day. The women down in Thorlau, whom Frau Stehelin had formed into a sort of Dorcas Society, were busily plying their needles making sheets and

covers for moss-beds. The men too were astir. It was felt that Michael and his wife should not be left alone in their noble struggle. The magistrate refused to have anything to do in the matter, because there was a quarrel between the neighbouring parishes, of which Thorlau was one, each trying to lay upon the other the burden of caring for the burners. But the burgomaster and the clergyman headed the collection by their private subscriptions. Thus a fund was got up to pay a doctor, a young man, who was engaged for six months, and for whom Michael built a little temporary house. He made it so large that there was also a room in it for himself and his wife, he having resolved to stay among the burners as long as the disease raged. Very fearfully it did rage, and very touching it was to see Michael and his noble band conveying the poor fever-stricken patients to the little hospital,—helping those who could walk or crawl, and carrying the others on stretchers.

Almost all the children recovered, though slowly. It took two or three months before they could resume their work. During that time they remained in the hospitals, as also did the orphans.

What was to be done with these little folks who were not now so sick as to be kept in bed, and yet were not strong enough to run about in the forest?

The answer to this question was obvious. The

little hospital was once more turned into a school-room ; and while the doctor superintended the patients in the larger building, Frau Stehelin and Machteld taught the children in the smaller one. And Michael, too, when his time permitted, was very willing to conduct a class. There was no lack of pupils now. The school-room was almost too small for the crowds who sought admission.

“Dinah,” said Michael to his wife, “I see now why the Lord sent the fever amongst them. It was to drive the children to our school, that they might be brought to Him who wants to save and to bless them.”

When a year had elapsed and the disease had altogether disappeared, there was not a poor child in the district above five years who could not read and write, sing hymns, and repeat portions of the Bible. They excited the well-to-do families to a noble jealousy, and they too sent their children. All prejudice had entirely vanished. It had become clear that Michael was not a delegate of the Government : nay, he had rescued the population from destruction in spite of the cowardly inhumanity of the magistrates.

It was now likewise clear to the people that Michael was their true friend, and as such they now loved him. They besought him to take up his abode amongst them.

"If you and your wife remain with us," they said, "we will all become better than we have been."

"Dinah," said Michael to his wife, "this is a call from the Lord, which, I think, we must obey."

And they did. The people revered and loved them as if they had been their father and mother. Michael got them set to work to improve both their social condition and their trade. Many old traditional abuses were done away with, and many improvements introduced. The brandy-bottle gradually disappeared, and the people took to spending their long winter evenings in making matches or mats, or in weaving calico.

Thus prosperity gradually took the place of neglect and destitution. And when the people were able to save a portion of their earnings, Michael prevailed upon them to subscribe for the support of a clergyman. He knew an excellent young candidate of divinity, who was a true servant of Christ; and, small as was the salary, and remote as was the place, this good man accepted the call with enthusiasm. Michael was so glad that he presented the people with a nice wooden chapel.

The carpenter and his wife have now gone to their rest, or, as Henni expressed it, "they have turned round the corner." Their graves are not far from their hospital-school, under a beautiful beech-tree, and surrounded by an iron railing. The place is

looked upon by the people as a sacred spot. There are no monuments except the church, the school, and the hospital. But the best monument is the prosperity, the health, the happiness of the people, who can never forget how Master Michael and his wife Dinah loved and befriended them.

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